A STUDY OF
FLORIDA TEACHER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

By

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
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The purpose of this case study was to determine the scope and
describe the characteristics of teacher assistance programs within the
State of Florida. Teacher Assistance Programs (TAPs) are district-
level programs for assisting experienced teachers who are having
career threatening performance difficulties. Specifically, this study
was designed to address the following research questions: (a) What is
the status of teacher assistance programs in the state of Florida?
(b) What are the characteristics of teacher assistance programs
reviewed in this study? (c) What are the perceptions of participants
in teacher assistance programs? (d) What characteristics appear to be
common in teacher assistance programs within the State of Florida?

Qualitative research methods were used in this case study, and a
three-phase research process was employed. Phase one was the
collection of initial data through a questionnaire mailed to all 67

Florida school districts. Only five districts were found to have active teacher assistance programs; all five were included in this study. Phase two of the research process followed the mailed questionnaire and consisted of 16 in-depth interviews with district staff, union officials, school-level administrators, assistance team members, and teachers receiving assistance. These interviews formed the primary data for this case study. These data were supplemented by survey data, archival records, and document collection. Phase three of the research process was analysis of data. Dimensions of an emerging model were described. Inherent in this model is a belief that teacher assistance is an obligation of the profession. Associated with the belief is a commitment to collegial assistance. Implications for practitioners were also discussed.

The following general conclusions were drawn from the findings. Teacher assistance programs in the State of Florida are in an emergent status. Perceptions of participants in teacher assistance programs appear to be influenced by both job role and attitude toward the value of teacher assistance. A number of identifiable strengths and weaknesses exist within teacher assistance programs in the State of Florida.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In the 1980s, in the United States, many questions were raised regarding the ability of the American education system to fulfill its mission. Reports such as <u>A Nation at Risk</u> (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) have raised doubts as to the quantity and quality of knowledge transmitted to American students by their teachers.

As this increased public outcry for improvement in both teaching practices and the teaching profession transpired, a simultaneous shortage of certified teachers occurred nationwide. Rush (1983) cited statistics from the National Education Association which indicated a drop from a 1972 total of 317,254 students completing teacher education programs to only 159,485 students graduating in 1980 (p. 34). Based on the results of a survey of teacher placement officers across the continental United States, it was determined that there was a national shortage of teachers in mathematics, all science areas, all areas of special education, industrial arts, business, and vocational agriculture (Rush, 1983).

The problem of too few teachers in some academic areas exists. This problem intensified in the 1980s, and was expected to continue

in the next decade (Brinks, 1981; Swerdlin, 1982). Because a shortage of teachers has become a reality, additional attention has been given to teacher retention, renewal, and remediation within the ranks of current teachers (Sarason, 1977; Walley & Stokes, 1981).

Barter (1984) asked, "what do you do about a teacher who was once OK but now doesn't seem to be doing so well?" (p. 37). McCormick (1985) answered Barter's question by describing a model that the school district of Toledo, Ohio, had implemented in an attempt to provide training for new teachers and remediation, as needed, for veteran teachers. The Toledo Teacher Assistance Program was one of the first comprehensive programs of its type in the country.

In the Toledo school system, administrators identified teachers who were exhibiting signs of either job stress or deficient teaching practices. The Toledo plan was described as a final intervention measure, and a teacher who was recommended for the assistance provided by the Toledo plan was one who had been judged to be in a status where either remediation or termination must occur. The school system conducted other programs designed to help teachers before their problems become critical. McCormick (1985) stated,

> The plan uses no specific checklist of deficiencies to identify candidates for intervention, but the process is simple. Both a building-level union committee and the principal must recommend intervention. The teacher is notified in a letter from the school system's personnel office that he will be required to participate in the program and that a consulting

teacher soon will be assigned. . . . There is no time
limit on intervention, but the process usually lasts
for approximately a year and a half. It encompasses
observations, discussions, and evaluations by the
consulting teacher. The intervention ends in one of
two ways: (1) the teacher achieves the specific goals
outlined by his consulting teacher; (2) one or both of
the teachers determines the situation is hopeless.
In the former case, the intervention graduate
continues classroom teaching, with occasional, informal,
follow-up communication with the consulting teacher.
In the latter case, the consulting teacher presents a
status report to a review panel which decides whether to
recommend termination or continued remediation. (p. 22)

Massey (1986) described the track record of the Toledo program by

referring to Dal Lawrence, president of the Toledo Federation of

Teachers. According to Lawrence, since the implementation of the

program, 27 experienced teachers had been identified for intervention.

Of those, 5 were still receiving assistance, one-third had left the

system, and "one-third had been saved" (Massey, 1986, p. 371).

Within the state of Florida, at least five school districts have

identified a need and implemented programs for teacher assistance.

Four of those have stated, as a high priority, the importance of

assuring that every classroom is staffed with a skilled professional

who is committed to providing a quality education for each and every

student. This priority, once established, focuses on the importance

of continuous professional growth for all instructional staff members,

and special assistance for those who require it.

Evidence of a renewed interest on the part of management

regarding employee revitalization as it affects productivity has not

been limited to the field of education. George (1987) wrote, "current corporate emphasis on performance management is more than a change in wording but rather signifies that improving employee performance and helping people to develop is a primary function of management" (p. 32). It is an increased sense of responsibility for providing assistance to employees in crisis that links education systems to corporations whose aim is employee remediation and retention.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this case study was to determine the scope and describe the characteristics of teacher assistance programs within the state of Florida. Specifically, this study was designed to address the following research questions:

1. What is the status of teacher assistance programs in the state of Florida?

    a. How many counties have implemented a teacher assistance program?

    b. How many counties are planning to implement a teacher assistance program?

2. What are the characteristics of teacher assistance programs reviewed in this study?

    a. How do these programs operate?

    b. Who is involved in teacher assistance programs?

3. What are the perceptions of participants in
   teacher assistance programs regarding program
   strenghts and weaknesses?
   a. What are the perceptions of district staff?
   b. What are the perceptions of consulting team
      members?
   c. What are the perceptions of teachers receiving
      assistance?
4. What characteristics appear to be common in
   teacher assistance programs within the state of
   Florida?

<div align="center">Need for the Study</div>

A shortage of teachers has existed in the United States (Rush,
1983). The state of Florida has also experienced teacher shortages,
as reported in the 1986 Florida Department of Education Fall Student
Survey. Approximately 4% of Florida's students are being instructed
by non-certified or temporarily certified instructors.

Having recognized that a need for additional teachers already
existed, some districts within the State of Florida have implemented
programs to assist and retain tenured teachers already in the teaching
force. Previously, a tenured teacher who was experiencing difficulty
was generally ignored or, if the problem became severe, dismissed
through professional practice procedures. Teacher assistance, as
defined in this study, has been specifically aimed at remediating

teachers who are performing unacceptably. The intent has been to provide professional, collegial assistance to teachers in distress, rehabilitate them, and retain them in the teaching profession.

Riegle (1985) discussed reasons for teacher job stress and failure as identified by their administrators. Riegel's review of the reported causes for teachers encountering career-threatening circumstances clearly indicated the major single problem to be classroom dynamics. In his study, administrators reported that the leading cause for teachers with job-threatening problems was their inability to organize and control a classroom setting.

A number of researchers have examined organizationally based stress that might affect workers' effectiveness and satisfaction (Drisscoll & Shirley, 1985; Grossnickle, 1978; Sylwester, 1978). In a study similar to Riegle's (1985) research, Milstein (1984) surveyed urban elementary school teachers' responses to stressors. The researchers indicated that teachers found stressors related to classroom life most problematic.

Cruickshank and Callahan (1983) discussed research pertaining to beginning teachers. Their research reflected a high degree of concern on the part of beginning teachers with maintaining control over students. Classroom control and organization were frequently identified concerns of both beginning and veteran teachers. If classroom organizational and discipline skills are not presently a

part of a particular teacher's repertoire, teacher assistance could provide needed help. A teacher assistance program could provide remediation and feedback to the teacher until classroom organization skills were strengthened.

One of the first teacher assistance programs in Florida was implemented in 1983. Since that time several other districts have implemented teacher assistance programs. Additional districts have expressed interest in teacher assistance programs or have sent representatives to attend a presentation made at the Florida Association of Curriculum Development by Mr. Thomas Benton of Lee County. At that meeting Benton described the inception and development of his county's teacher assistance program.

This study was designed as a case study of teacher assistance programs as they existed in the state of Florida; the study was primarily descriptive in nature. Data collected could be used to modify or revise the design of a school district's teacher assistance program. Additionally, the results of this study provide baseline data for districts within or outside the state of Florida that are considering implementation of a teacher assistance program.

<u>Delimitations</u>

This study was delimited to the 67 school districts within the State of Florida.

Limitations

Data obtained in this study were of a descriptive nature. The scope of the study was restricted by response to the initial questionnaire, which in turn shaped the research questions as they applied to key informants in districts which had implemented TAPs, as defined here. Rather than producing data which are generalizable to other situations, this study provided an overview of current practice in Florida school districts.

Definition of Terms

Teacher Assistance Program (TAP). A teacher assistance program refers to a school district's plan for assisting teachers, especially experienced teachers who are having career-threatening performance difficulties. Teacher assistance programs as described in this study are characterized by (a) a philosophical belief that management has an obligation in teacher assistance, (b) collegial involvement, (c) a team approach, (d) administrative involvement, and (e) union involvement.

Descriptive research. The purpose of descriptive research is to describe systematically a situation or area of interest factually and accurately (Isaac & Michael, 1972).

Collegial supervision. Collegial supervision refers to teachers observing teachers and working together for instructional improvement.

Case study. An empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context is referred to as a case study.

Organization of the Study

The remainder of this dissertation has been organized into four chapters. A review of related literature on theory and research in instructional supervision, collegial supervision, the administrator's role in teacher assistance and dismissal, and model programs constitutes Chapter II. The research perspective, case study methodology, the sample, instrument development, procedures, and analysis of data are described in Chapter III. The results and discussion of results are presented in Chapter IV. Conclusions, implications, a summary of the research, and recommendations for future research are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In this study, the scope and effectiveness of teacher assistance programs within the state of Florida were examined. In order to provide perspective for this study, a knowledge of what is occurring at the national level as well as a familiarity with the research related to teacher assistance is necessary. The review of literature encompasses the broad topics germane to this study. These are (a) theory and research in instructional supervision, (b) collegial supervision and evaluation, (c) the administrator's role in assistance and dismissal, and (d) model programs.

Theory and Research in Instructional Supervision

Teacher assistance is an emerging practice within the field of instructional supervision. In order to provide perspective for this study, an insight into recent practices in supervision as well as a familiarity with the research related to teacher assistance is necessary. In narrowing the focus to this particular study, the review of literature will consider four broad topics: (a) theory and research in instructional supervision, (b) collegial supervision and evaluation, (c) the administrator's role in assistance and dismissal,

and (d) model programs similar to those emerging in Florida.
Discussion of these broad areas will provide perspective for examining
teacher assistance programs as an emerging, collegial practice within
the field of supervision.

<div align="center">Supervision Practices</div>

Common-law Approach

McGreal (1983) described the most commonly employed method of
teacher supervision and evaluation as a "common-law" model. He
utilized the term common-law to indicate a school district's having
utilized a procedure so long that they have married it by formally
adopting it. McGreal indicated that approximately 65% of the school
districts in this country employ common-law procedures. Common-law
systems of supervision and evaluation are characterized by high
supervisor-low teacher involvement.

McGreal further stated:

> In almost all instances the procedures defined by
> common-law systems require the supervisor to "do
> something to the teacher," as can be seen in
> recommendations as to how often evaluation occurs and
> who does it to whom. In spite of what is said in the
> philosophy statement, the teacher is a relatively passive
> participant in the process. The supervisor determines
> when visits will be conducted; the supervisor completes
> the requires instrumentation; and the supervisor
> conducts the final evaluative conference. (p. 10)

Other characteristics of common-law systems are (a) a tendency
to see evaluation as synonymous with observation, (b) little variation
in the supervisory process for tenured and non-tenured teachers, and

(c) an emphasis on summative outcomes. The major advantage of this type of system is its utility. It is very workable given a high teacher-to-supervisor ratio. One major disadvantage is that this model promulgates "watchdog" attitudes. Another disadvantage of this system lies in the lack of involvement and contact between supervisor and supervisee.

Naturalistic Approaches to Supervision

In the 1970s, Sergiovanni (1977) and Eisner (1978) offered alternative models of supervision which addressed the lack of teacher involvement cited in the common-law model. Sergiovanni (in McGreal, 1983) described the artistic or naturalistic approach to supervision by stating:

> Artistic approaches to supervision and teacher evaluation stem from a belief that despite the existence of scientific aspects of teaching, teaching is essentially an art. Advocates of this view, for example, point out that there is often a performance quality to teaching characterized by both skill and grace which liken it to an aesthetic experience. (p. 30)

In a similar article, Sergiovanni (1977) suggested employing methods of supervision and evaluation which were less supervisory and more collegially oriented. He described a naturalistic approach to supervision as one that found value in discovering as opposed to measuring.

Eisner (1978) also advocated an artistic approach to supervision. Eisner described a process called educational connoisseurship in which

teachers visited the classroom of their colleagues in order to observe and share in a mutually supportive manner. He further stated that in such a model "less professional isolation and more professional communication might go a long way to help all teachers better understand their own teaching" (p. 622).

The focus of the naturalistic or artistic approach to supervision includes observations done in classrooms and the reporting of those observations. The emphasis is on the style and quality of the descriptions more than on a prescriptive assessment of what is occurring.

Clinical Supervision

Clinical supervision is a third major practice within the broad field of instructional supervision. Clinical supervision is collegial in nature and derives its name from the intensity and focus that binds teacher and supervisor together in a supervisory cycle. Goldhammer, Anderson, and Krajewski's (1980) model of clinical supervision is based on a five-stage process which is referred to as the sequence of supervision (p. 32).

The five stages are (a) pre-observation conference, (b) observation of teaching, (c) analysis and strategy, (d) post-observation conference, and (e) post-conference analysis. A brief description of each stage follows.

Pre-observation conference. The pre-observation and planning
stage requires both teacher and supervisor to discuss goals and aims
of the specific lesson to be observed. Rapport should begin to
develop and the parties should feel comfortable prior to the actual
observation.

Observation of teaching. Usually the time of the observation
visit, the location, any equipment to be brought along (audio or video
recorder, camera) and an understanding about whether the supervisor
will interact with students will have been determined in advance. The
focus of the observation is on the teacher and his or her interactions
with students. McGreal (1983) stated that "notes taken during the
observation should be descriptive rather than evaluative. The
descriptive notes based on the agreed focus from the preconference are
then analyzed by the supervisor" (p. 28).

Analysis and strategy. Goldhammer et al. (1983) stated:

> Of all the tasks that confront the supervisor in the course
> of the clinical observation cycle, probably none makes more
> demands upon the intellectual resources of the supervisor
> than the thinking that follows an observation and precedes
> the feedback session with the teacher. (p. 84)

During this stage the observer displays data collected during the
observation and helps the teacher analyze what was happening during
the lesson by identifying patterns within the data.

Post-observation conference. This conference which occurs in
stage four is intended to provide feedback for improvement of future

teaching. Feedback for improvement may include (a) didactic help, (b) training in techniques of teacher self-improvement, or (c) development of incentives for professional self-analysis (Goldhammer et al., 1983).

   Post-conference analysis. Goldhammer et al. (1983) described the post-conference analysis as

   a self-improvement mechanism whose purposes include: 1.
   assessment of the conference in terms of (a) the teacher's
   criteria as determined in the preobservation conference,
   (b) the supervisory criteria, and (c) the apparent value
   of the conference to the teacher. 2. Evaluation of the
   supervisor's skill in handling the several phases of the
   cycle. (p. 177)

   This last stage of the conference cycle is extremely important. It serves as a basis for determining whether the supervisory process is working effectively by mutually comparing expectations and outcomes.

   This description of clinical supervision concludes the overview of broad practices within instructional supervision. The next section of the review focuses specifically on collegial supervision.

Support for Collegial Supervision

   The concept of collegial supervision—teachers observing teachers and working together for instructional improvement has been experiencing a renewed popularity. Under a variety of names, the process of peer observation and feedback has been seen as a means of increasing teachers' accountability and frequency of supervision while

at the same time breaking down some of the barriers that have isolated teachers and hindered them from collaborating.

There is evidence that teachers desire an opportunity for closer interaction with peers, particularly on the subject of instruction. Holly (in Singh, 1984) reported that teachers indicated colleagues to be their first source of professional help even when supervising assistance was available. Jenson (1981) cited the willingness of teachers to be observed and receive assistance from colleagues.

Singh (1984) described the main goal of a collegial evaluation system as the improvement of instruction. He further stated that an environment can be achieved where teachers see themselves as supportive of each other while working toward maximizing instructional potential.

Two excellent examples of applying the theory of collegial support to actual instructional improvement are (a) <u>Handbook for Middle School Teaching</u> (George & Lawrence, 1982) and (b) <u>Florida Modules on Generic Teaching Competencies</u> (Panhandle Area Educational Cooperative, 1973).

George and Lawrence (1982) wrote a handbook for middle school teachers utilizing the peer panel and portfolio procedure. The instructional mode of this handbook was predicated on peer panels (groups of three to five teachers or teacher candidates) helping each other develop and measure teaching skills collaboratively. The

handbook provided sufficient structure for a peer panel to function, including most management functions typically performed by a supervisor. Working collaboratively and utilizing the handbook, teachers became co-producers rather than consumers of their professional development programs.

The Florida Models on Generic Teaching Competencies were also developed as a collegial and collaborative approach to inservice education. Utilized throughout the state of Florida in the 1970s, these modules, which also utilized peer-panel instruction, enabled hundreds of teachers to obtain middle school certification.

Shea (1982) also advocated peer-assisted supervision. He described peer-assisted supervision as a set of procedures which "permit the supervisor, the principal and a small group of teachers (peers) to adopt new roles as they work together to improve teaching performance" (p. 19). Shea further described how under his direction a successful in-class supervision model was carried out by a local school district and a nearby university. Elements of clinical supervision and peer-assistance were utilized and participants reported satisfaction with the process.

Joyce and Showers (1982) addressed collegiality and collaboration through the establishment of coaching teams among teachers in all schools. The teams they described would regularly observe one another and provide feedback and support. Additional support for the concept

of collegial relationships came from Eisner (1978). He made the
following statement:

> I would like to see schools in which teachers can
> function as professional colleagues where a part of
> their professional role was to visit the classroom
> of their colleagues and to observe and share with
> them in a supportive, informal and useful way what
> they have seen. (p. 622)

Advantages of Collegial Supervision

Cutter and Grossnickle (1984) described the advantages of
teachers assisting teachers for instructional improvement as follows:

> The advantages of collegial evaluation include increased
> validity, a mechanism for formative evaluation and an
> opportunity for professional development. This format
> can be perceived as more valid because the frequency of
> visits is greater and because teachers believe that
> fellow teachers have more expertise than administrators
> where teacher evaluation is involved.
>   In addition, the collegial system increases the
> opportunity for, and the impact of, formative evaluation;
> suggestions for improvement are more likely to be heeded
> when they come from peers. This format also exposes the
> teacher to a variety of techniques and philosophies, and
> provides the administrator with a better appraisal link
> between organizational goals and actual classroom
> activities. (pp. 58-59)

Alfonso and Goldberry (1982) stated, "by developing collaborative
networks among teachers and by providing structured opportunities for
peer review, schools can enrich the organizational climate while
providing classroom teachers a potentially powerful vehicle for
instructional improvement" (p. 99).

McCormick (1985) described how collegial evaluation is used in
Toledo for remediation. An advantage of the collegial relationships

she described was the strengthening of the bond between teachers and administrators. Teachers took an active role in directing colleagues either to improvement or termination. McCormick added that Toledo's evaluation and remediation program has drawn a great deal of attention because it "is reputed to be one of the first in the United States to use teachers themselves to help rid their ranks of incompetent colleagues" (p. 22).

Unlike McCormick, the majority of researchers in this review discussed collegial relationships and peer evaluation primarily as a formative measure. Additional sections of this review cover the results obtained by the Toledo, Ohio, and Salt Lake City, Utah, school systems when collegial relationships were used in a summative manner.

Teachers' Receptivity to Collegiality

Thus far, the writer has discussed support for the concept of collegiality as a means of educational improvement and listed some advantages of collegial supervision and evaluation. Factors which may provide a more receptive environment for collegiality will be examined in this section of the review of the literature.

Ruck (1986) wrote:

> A few years ago, principals attempting to introduce collegiality as a norm within their school had an uphill battle. In the last decade, however, three factors seem to have considerably weakened the barriers to teacher collaboration.
> The most dramatic change was related to the passage of Public Law 94-142, which not only released many exceptional children from the isolation of their special

classrooms, but also forced professionals by law to talk
with one another. IEP (Individualized Educational Plan)
meetings brought parents, administrators, specialists,
special education teachers, and regular classroom teachers
together to share information and solve common problems.
Predictably, classroom teachers were the least prepared
for these collegial relationships and initially the most
defensive. Gradually, however, these teachers have become
more open, better informed, and more willing to contribute
their expertise. (p. 4)

Ruck commented on another factor that has promoted a
receptive environment for collegiality. This factor is consistent
public criticism of schools and teachers. Adversity tends to bring
people together and there is a strong movement in education to raise
the status of the profession by collective, collaborative effort.

Finally, the recent report by the Carnegie Forum's Task Force on
Teaching as a Profession (1986) contends that high caliber teachers
are leaving the profession at an increasing rate. Collegial
supervision may be one means of retaining these highly competent
performers.

Phelps (1986) described the implementation of peer coaching in an
isolated area of rural Tennessee. Checklists of teaching behaviors
and videotapes were utilized to disseminate research on effective
teaching. Phelps reported positive experiences when working with
teachers in peer coaching teams. Post observation showed high teacher
acceptance of research findings and improved teaching performance as
measured by the Tennessee Technological University Effective Teaching
Checklist.

Ellis (1987) also found an atmosphere of acceptance for collegiality. He described the chief advantage of collegiality to be the marshalling of resources necessary to achieve the task of improved instruction.

Obstacles to Collegial Relationships

Grossnickle and Cutter (1984) listed the following threats to collegial supervision:

> (1) time away from the classroom required for planning and goal-setting throughout the school year—typically fourteen to twenty-four hours; (2) validity—as measured by having an ability to direct behavior toward the completion of organizational goals and the potential for personal growth and development; and (3) competence—the ability of one professional to evaluate another.

In a similar article, Ellis (1987) cited the ingrained habits of teachers and administrators as the chief obstacle to collegial relationships (p. 15). Ellis also discussed some teacher's reluctance to invite scrutiny of their work by others.

Lastly, Ruck (1986) alluded to the difficulty collegial supervision can pose for the administrator. She described the fine line between involvement and interference from the administrator as an important factor in the ultimate success of the peer relationship.

The Administrator's Role in Assistance and Dismissal

Unfortunately neither an atmosphere of collegiality, nor an exemplary program of teacher assistance, are sufficient to guarantee teacher remediation. In this section of the review of literature,

the historical background for tenure and dismissal and the administrator's role in teacher evaluation, teacher assistance, and teacher dismissal will be examined.

Historical Background for Tenure and Dismissal

Beale (in Larson, 1983) stated that teachers in colonial times had no legal claim to permanent tenure. In practice, however, they often held office for life. With the arrival of Jacksonian democracy came public controversy over who should hold teaching positions. Inherent in the spirit of this new democracy was popular possession of public offices and a spoils system. Teacher tenure became precarious. Teaching positions were frequency handed about as petty favors to friends. In the early 1870s, demands for the merit system in politics were accompanied by new attitudes toward teachers and the educational process. Realization that good teachers could not be kept under the previous method of filling positions caused a need for tenure to emerge. In 1886, Massachusetts enacted the first state law relating to teacher evaluation, tenure, and job security.

In addressing the issue of tenure in the 1980s, Claxton (1986) noted that one-third of the states have express remediation requirements mandated by statute prior to teacher dismissal. He further stated that many other states have similar requirements derived from local policy. Larson (1983) wrote that "approximately half of the 50 states have statutes or administrative regulations

which deal directly with evaluation of public school teachers. Before
any dismissal procedure can even be considered, laws and
administrative regulations of the state should be reviewed with
competent legal authority" (p. 28). In a period of 200 years, teacher
tenure has gone from being a nonentity to being a serious
consideration in the process of teacher evaluation, assistance, and
dismissal.

Assisting the Teacher in Distress

Bridges (1985), a professor of education at Stanford University,
spoke for many principals when he stated:

> Too often the efforts and accomplishments of the nation's
> very able teachers are overshadowed by the poor performances
> of a relatively small number of incompetent classroom
> teachers. The accomplishments of the competent majority
> will continue to be overlooked and unappreciated unless
> principals deal directly with unsatisfactory teachers.
> Worse yet, public dissatisfaction with the schools and with
> the quality of teaching will continue to rise. (p. 57)

Adding this viewpoint to the previously mentioned concerns
regarding nationwide teacher shortages (Brinks, 1981; Rush, 1983;
Swerdlin, 1982) underscores the importance of identifying and
remediating teachers in distress.

Teachers experiencing job stress or deficient teaching practices
are frequently labeled as incompetent. Although many state
legislatures have singled out incompetence as a legal ground for
dismissal, only two states (Alaska and Tennessee) have supplied
definitions for incompetence. Even in those two states, specific
criteria for judging incompetence in the classroom was not identified

(Bridges, 1985). As a result, the burden of defining incompetence falls on the shoulders of school administrators, the individuals who are formally charged with evaluating teacher performance.

Bridges and Groves (1984) stated that when administrators define incompetence they tend to think of it in terms of failure. Failure is described as:

1. <u>Technical failure</u>. The teacher's expertise falls short of what the task requires. Technical failure is indicated by deficiencies in one or more of the following: discipline, teaching methods, knowledge of subject matter, explanation of concepts, evaluation of pupil performance, organization, planning lesson plans, and homework assignments.

2. <u>Bureaucratic failure</u>. The teacher fails to comply with school/district rules and regulations or directives of superiors. Bureaucratic failure is indicated by the teacher's failure to follow suggestions for improving his or her performance, to adhere to the content of the district's curriculum or to allow supervisors in the classroom for purposes of observing the teacher's performance.

3. <u>Ethical failure</u>. The teacher fails to conform to standards of conduct presumably applicable to members of the teaching profession. Violations of these standards commonly take the form of physical or psychological abuse of students, negative attitudes toward students, and indifferent performance of one's teaching duties.

4. <u>Productive failure</u>. The teacher fails to obtain certain desirable results in the classroom. Productive failure is indicated by the academic progress of students, the interest of students in what is being taught, the attitudes of students toward school, the respect of students for the teacher, and the climate of the classroom.

5. <u>Personal failure</u>. The teacher lacks certain cognitive, affective, or physical attributes deemed instrumental in teaching. Indicators of personal deficiencies include poor judgment, emotional instability, lack of self-control, and insufficient strength to withstand the rigors of teaching. (pp. 58-59)

Bridges and Groves amplified by stating that when school administrators utilize their discretion in deciding what is or is not incompetence, the courts are very likely to defer to the administrator's definition. Judges are likely to accept the administrator's definition of incompetence as long as the criteria embodied in this definition have been communicated to teachers and teachers have received information about the specific ways in which their performance has failed to satisfy the criteria. Ambiguity surrounding the definition of incompetence does not pose an insurmountable barrier to the administrator when dealing with the incompetent teacher.

Brieschke (1987) stated, "as managers of teachers, principals must cope with a variety of mistakes in their schools. Over time these cumulative mistakes lead to a state of borderline incompetence in the teacher" (p. 341). Brieschke conducted a study in which 30 elementary principal interviews, 19 borderline incompetent teacher interviews, and principals' records, identified five administrative stages of coping with the teacher's mistakes. Mistakes emerged as follows:

> (1) deployment is the stage of enlisting the teacher's
> colleagues to watch over him or her and report back to
> the principal on the teacher's behavior; (2) detente is
> the stage of bringing the troubled teacher within the
> society of peers and rallying forces to help solve his
> or her problems; (3) determination is the stage in which
> the principal decides that the range of the teacher's
> deviations exceeds the boundaries of normative behavior

and that there is cause for dismissal; (4) evaluation is the stage in which principals provide efficiency ratings for teachers (this is a formal process that occurs for all teachers but is accompanied by extensive documentation and record keeping for teachers who have been identified as borderline incompetent); and (5) formal dismissal is the last stage in which the principal takes action to remove a teacher from the school. (p. 342)

The 30 principals identified 156 cases of borderline incompetence over 3 years. Of these teachers, 73 were administratively transferred to other teaching assignments and 1 was dismissed. No formal TAP was available to these teachers.

Roy (1979) stated approximately 5% of the nation's two million public school teachers are incompetent. Roy added that "teacher evaluation and remediation, to be effective in terms of increasing student learning, must be based upon the belief that teachers want to improve their teaching, and that it is the administration's role to help them improve" (p. 275). The administrator's role in improvement of this 5% of the teaching force could be augmented by implementation and participation in a teacher assistance program. A peer teacher serving in a consulting role could provide inservice and model teaching and classroom organizational skills which would facilitate remediation. This collaborative, collegial approach between administrators and teachers to remediation has been successful in Salt Lake City and Toledo and appears promising as a vehicle for remediation.

If a TAP were available, many of those functioning incompetently could be remediated. Riegle (1985) stated, "a review of the reported causes for teachers encountering career-threatening circumstances clearly indicated that subject matter weaknesses are not the major factors" (p. 17). Riegle found classroom dynamics and difficulties in the establishment of an environment conducive to learning to be the most frequently cited causes for teacher failure. Frequently, teachers who are performing unacceptably in the area of classroom management have never observed exemplary management. A collegial experience could be the answer.

Teachers experience failure. Riegle (1985) discussed why and Brieschke (1987) described ways administrators cope with teachers who are failing to demonstrate an acceptable level of performance. The next section of this review will deal with the principal's role in remediation and dismissal.

Remediation and Dismissal

Bridges (1985) described managing the incompetent teacher as a difficult activity. Administrators may pay a high psychological price for dealing forthrightly with the unsatisfactory teacher. An administrator's efforts may arouse feelings of fear, guilt, self-doubt, and anger. Fear is a factor because the administrator may suspect other teachers will be defensive of a colleague who is experiencing failure and retaliate. Bridges further described a

situation where the administrator who was attempting to manage the teacher in distress was frustrated by the need to spend so much time on such an unrewarding task.

Pellicer and Hendrix (1980) suggested one way to avoid such frustration in the evaluation, remediation, and dismissal process was to have a simple blueprint. They suggested a common problem shared by principals in schools throughout the country is making decisions about employees who are not satisfactorily meeting job expectations. They described three courses of action a principal could take in addressing this problem: (a) seek improvement through inservice or some other form of remediation, (b) dismiss the employee, and (c) ignore the offending employee.

In discussing ways to seek employee improvement, Pellicer and Hendrix described a diagnostic prescriptive approach to remediation which is linked with the Professional Practices Council of the State of Florida. Six steps are involved:

1. Deficiencies are identified.
2. The deficiencies are keyed to some widely recognized standard of professional performance, such as the Professional Practices Council (PPC) Standards in Florida, for definition purposes.
3. A set of objectives is developed to facilitate improvement in each area of deficiency.
4. Strategies and resources that can be utilized to reach the objectives developed in step three are identified.
5. A time frame is established for the staff member being remediated to implement the strategies and make satisfactory progress toward meeting the objectives.
6. During the entire remediation process, continuous administrative assistance, support, and encouragement is extended to the staff member in meeting the established objectives. (Pellicer & Hendrix, 1980, p. 60)

When entering a situation requiring remediation, a principal should assume the philosophical posture that everyone, including the principal, has strengths and weaknesses in relation to expectations and performance. A principal who is going to precipitate successful remediation must believe strengths and weaknesses can be identified and that strengths of both the individual and professional colleagues can be utilized to help eliminate areas of weakness.

The last section of this review describes two model teacher assistance programs. These two programs involve administrators and teachers working together in a collegial manner, while striving to improve teaching performance.

Model Teacher Assistance Programs

In the second section of this review, some advantages of collegiality were discussed. These included teachers assisting teachers for instructional purposes. Several studies (Alfonso & Goldberry, 1982; Phelps, 1986; Ruck, 1986) were cited which indicated a receptiveness on the part of teachers for collegial supervision and assistance. In this section, the programs of two school districts where the theory of teacher assistance has been translated into practice will be described. Salt Lake City and Toledo have both established viable TAPs.

Salt Lake City's Assistance Program

The Salt Lake City School District (SLCSD) teacher evaluation system, which includes peer review and assistance for deficient

teachers, was instituted in 1975. The Performance Assistance Program has provided for strong, experienced teachers (peer reviewers) to work with teachers identified by their principals as deficient.

Benzley (1985) described the teacher assistance program in Salt Lake City, known as performance assistance, as follows:

> Performance assistance is a multi-level process that begins with the Accountability Plan. According to a written agreement between the superintendent and the teachers; organization, every teacher is to confer with his/her principal to complete the district's Accountability Plan. This plan includes supporting goals and objectives established by the Board of Education and the individual school (individual teacher goals are now optional). The district and the teachers' association have developed a list of teaching expectations as a standard to judge the accomplishment of these goals. The stated position of both the superintendent and the association is that "persons not suited to the educational setting should not be employed in the district." (p. 2)

A principal may determine that a teacher is falling short of the plan's goal. At that time the principal must notify the teacher in writing of perceived deficiencies. The teacher may at that time request a union representative to be present when recommendations for improvement are given. This is considered an informal stage of assistance and not noted in the individual's personnel file.

In the Salt Lake City plan, individuals not achieving improvement at the informal level described above are recommended for Formal Remediation. This is considered step three of performance assistance. The decision to use this third and last step is left solely to the principal, but at this step a team of four people is formed. A

learning specialist from the central district office is assigned by the superintendent to be in charge of the team and act as coordinator. The teacher's principal is automatically on the team. The other two members are appointed by the Salt Lake City Teacher's Association. One is an association coordinator whose role is to guarantee due process, and the fourth team member is a grade or subject specific assisting teacher.

Team activities are not specifically outlined. The team is charged with seeking a method of remediation most appropriate for each situation. Teams often engage in some form of independent fact-finding and may observe and provide individualized service for the teacher. A plan for improvement is developed collaboratively by the team and the teacher. The district provides for other skilled teachers, on leave or retired, to be hired for a few weeks to work with the teacher, at the discretion of the team.

Benzley described the culmination of the Salt Lake City assistance process:

> A plan for performance assistance is developed cooperatively with the teacher and the team, and includes periodic reviews. The first occurs two months after this plan is put into effect. The team has the option at that time to terminate proceedings, if Performance Assistance has been successful, or to continue for an additional three months, if not. At the end of five months if the team and the principal determine the process is still not successful, the end result is either termination or reassignment. Any time during that five months, if satisfactory performance is achieved, the team can terminate the process. Records are destroyed for those achieving success. (p. 32)

Originally, the Salt Lake City plan required that the team members reach consensus regarding the outcome of the procedure. The teachers association has since requested that principals make the final evaluative decision based on their observations as well as the team's recommendations.

Toledo's Teacher Assistance Program

Lawrence (1985) and McCormick (1985) described the Toledo program in separate articles. Lawrence is the president of the Toledo Federation of Teachers. McCormick is an administrator in Toledo, Ohio. Taken together, their articles presented an insight into Toledo's assistance program, also known as the Toledo Plan.

The intervention process, in Toledo, "is aimed at those performing so poorly that the need for help is obvious" (Lawrence, 1985, p. 352). Once a teacher who is experiencing difficulty has been identified both the school union committee and the principal must agree that intervention is needed. Prior to that, the district's personnel department and union officials must agree to authorize consideration of the matter by the principal and committee. Each side has a veto.

Once consensus is reached on the need for intervention, a consulting teacher is assigned with one directive: Do everything possible to raise performance to acceptable levels. The length of the intervention is not specified. Initially through techniques learned

in inservice training, the consulting teacher tries to allay the
intervention teacher's feelings of trauma and and builds rapport. As
an open relationship develops, the teacher accepts the notion that the
consulting teacher is not trying to take his or her job, but rather
to help strengthen skills. Modeling behavior, demonstration lessons,
observation, and feedback are the most frequently used techniques in
attempting to strengthen the intervention teacher. The consulting
teacher works with the teacher receiving assistance until success has
been achieved, failure is obvious, or further improvement unlikely.

Lawrence further stated:

> If school officials decide to initiate termination
> proceedings, the union then decides whether to defend the
> troubled teacher through arbitration as specified in the
> contract. We have established an internal review procedure
> that places considerable reliance on the status report
> given by the consulting teacher. There is also an
> independent arbitrator who rules on the appropriateness
> of the intervention placement at the outset if requested
> by the teacher. The arbitrator's decision is binding on
> all parties.
>   In three years we have intervened with 24 teachers.
> Two-thirds of the procedures have been initiated by school
> union committees. Almost half of those placed in
> intervention are still in the program. Seven are no
> longer teaching. Five are now doing satisfactory work.
>   In the spring of 1984, we asked the teaching staff a
> tough, a certainly critical, question: "When a colleague
> is doing very poor work and a decision is made to
> terminate the contract, should we defend the teacher if
> asked, or make the decision to remove the person from the
> profession?" They responded as follows: 101 said, "Defend
> the person"; 1195 said, "Exercise professional judgment."
> Based on my experience here in Toledo, plus recent polls of
> teacher attitudes taken nationally, it is clear that
> classroom personnel are ready to assume far greater
> professional responsibilities than many thought. (p. 23)

Unforeseen developments have occurred following the implementation of the Toledo Plan. School principals who opposed the plan originally have changed their minds. Teacher interest and support for the program has grown despite some terminations and nonrenewals. McCormick (1985), describing the acceptance of the Toledo Plan, wrote:

> Although to an outsider the intervention program might seem a breeding ground for staff discontent, both union officials and administrators claim it actually has helped raise staff morale. Reason: Teachers are taking part in decisions to help—or help get rid of—the faculty member whose performance reflects poorly on the rest of them. (p. 23)

Lawrence (1984) noted that most teachers have nothing to worry about. Intervention is aimed at people who are conspicuously incompetent.

<u>Summary</u>

A literature review was conducted on the following broad areas pertaining to teacher assistance: (a) theories and research on instructional supervision, (b) collegial supervision, (c) the administrator's role in teacher assistance and dismissal, and (d) model programs. The literature suggested (a) teachers are open to collegial supervision, (b) programs in various parts of the country are achieving success in remediation and dismissal, and (c) administrators and colleagues who concentrate on building upon strengths can facilitate successful remediation through the process of teacher assistance.

CHAPTER III
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The problem of this case study was to determine the scope and
describe the attributes of teacher assistance programs within the
state of Florida. The research process described in this chapter
consisted of three phases. Phase one was the collection of initial
data through a questionnaire mailed to all 67 school districts. Phase
two of the research process was a follow-up on data identified through
the mailed questionnaire and consisted of 16 in-depth interviews.
Phase three of the research process was analysis of data. The primary
aims of this research were to describe the current status of teacher
assistance programs in Florida and to open the field for further
research.

Research Perspective

Blumer (1969) and Denzin (1978) have discussed the importance of
uniting the researcher's theoretical perspective with the research
methodology utilized in the study. Denzin (1978) advocated that the
research act be a logical extension of the researcher's theoretical
assumptions. The qualitative research tradition of symbolic
interaction provided the framework for this case study. The premise
of this tradition is that human behavior is based on meaning.

Meanings are learned through social interaction and groups develop shared meanings.

Jacob (1987) stated:

Symbolic interactionists assume that meanings arise
through social interaction with others (Blumer, 1969).
"The meaning of a thing for a person grows out of the
ways in which other persons act toward the thing"
(Blumer, 1969, p. 4). Thus, meanings are seen as
social products. . . . "Symbolic interaction sees
group life as a process which people, as they meet in
their different situations, indicate lines of action
to each other and interpret the indications made by
others" (Blumer, 1969, p. 52). (p. 35)

Jacob further stated that symbolic interactionism is an appropriate theoretical construct when conducting qualitative research on a group that holds a similar position in an institution and faces similar circumstances.

This researcher was interested in describing and analyzing the perceptions of members of role groups such as teachers, principals, subject area specialists, district administrators, and union officials as they collaborated on the process of teacher assistance. Symbolic interaction was deemed an appropriate research perspective because of its assumption that humans behave based on the meanings things have to them, that meanings are learned through social interaction, and that groups develop shared messages. Since the perspectives concerning teacher assistance programs held by members of each of the preceding groups were of interest to the researcher, a form of case study methodology was utilized. This methodology allowed the researcher to

describe the perspectives of many different individuals first at each of the various sites (embedded cases) and then allowed for analysis across cases. Additional information on reliability and validity of case study methodology are presented in the next section.

Case Study Methodology

The case study approach combines appropriate elements of quantitative and qualitative research. "The essence of a case study, the central tendency among all types of case studies is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result" (Yin, 1984, p. 22). The subject of this research was those decisions regarding the implementation and functioning of teacher assistance programs within the State of Florida.

More specifically, a number of "what" questions were asked. What is the level of implementation of teacher assistance programs in the State of Florida? What are the characteristics of teacher assistance programs described in this study? What are the perceptions of the role groups, i.e., personnel directors, administrators, teachers, and union officials, about teacher assistance programs? What characteristics appear to be common in teacher assistance programs within the state of Florida? This design was conducive to attempting to see commonalities and patterns as well as discrepancies among teacher assistance programs as they are implemented in various school

districts. Identifying patterns, commonalities, and discrepancies was crucial not only to answering the preceding research questions but to opening up the field of teacher assistance to further research.

Yin (1984) further suggested that case study methodology is appropriate methodology when the researcher has little or no control over the events being studied (p. 13). Although the researcher was describing programs over which he had no control, he could, through case study methodology, attempt to illuminate decisions regarding their emergence and describe their scope and effectiveness.

Foreman (1948) pointed to the following four situations when the utility of case studies may be particularly evident:

1. Where the immediate problem is to open a field for research.

2. Where the problem demands further conceptualization of factors or functions affecting a given activity.

3. Where the problem demands emphasis on the pattern of interpretation given by subjects or functionaries.

4. Where the problem is to determine the particular pattern of factors significant in a given case.

Situation one, as described by Foreman, made case study methodology particularly appropriate for this research, as one of the aims of this case study was to present initial descriptive data on the status of teacher assistance programs, thereby opening the field for further research.

Situation two was also present in this case study. Conceptualization of how teacher assistance programs actually delivered assistance to a teacher was enhanced by the utilization of case study methodology.

In situation three, as delineated by Foreman above, case study methodology had particular utility when the researcher interviewed respondents with different job roles in order to obtain their perceptions of teacher assistance. Lastly, situation four had application for this case study when the researcher sought to identify strengths and weaknesses of teacher assistance programs.

<u>Reliability</u>

The strengths of the case study method have been documented and its weaknesses described (Hoaglin, 1982; Yin, 1984). Suggestions have been offered to improve the construct, internal and external validity of the method. Yin suggested that, when possible, previous literature and case studies be employed to further define the case under consideration (1984). In an examination of the literature, Salt Lake City and Toledo teacher assistance programs were reviewed in order to provide perspective for Florida TAPs.

Goetz and Lecompte (1984) discussed problems of reliability in conducting ethnographies, interviews, case studies, and other naturalistic research. Goetz and Lecompte stated,

> Reliability refers to the extent to which studies can be replicated. It requires that a researcher using the same methods can obtain the same results as those of a

> prior study. This poses a herculean problem for
> researchers concerned with naturalistic behavior or
> unique phenomena. Establishing the reliability of
> ethnographic designs is complicated by the nature of
> the data and the research process, by conventions in
> the presentations of findings, and by traditional
> modes of training researchers. (p. 17)

Goetz and Lecompte identified several methods by which internal

reliability could be enhanced. Two of the methods discussed by Goetz

and Lecompte, peer examination as a means of corroboration, and

mechanically recorded data were utilized by this researcher.

Goetz and Lecompte discussed the benefits of seeking

corroboration from colleagues with expertise in the researcher's field

of interest. During the course of this case study research findings

were shared with both professional colleagues and fellow research

participants. Data collection was discussed, suggestions for further

research were received and alternative explanations for findings were

postulated. Peer examination and corroboration were utilized

throughout the data collection and analysis process.

Goetz and Lecompte also stated "although equipment that works for

one researcher may malfunction for another, data collection that

relies on tape recorders, photographs or videotape strengthens the

reliability of results" (p. 33). All participants in this case study

were tape recorded and the tapes were professionally transcribed.

Additional information regarding tape recording can be found later in

this chapter under the section entitled Procedures.

Lastly, reliability is a function in large part of the researcher's training, perspectives, and biases. Schwartz and Schwartz (1969) stated "one's frame of reference, in part a product of one's professional training influences the selections one makes from the phenomenon and determine how and what is observed" (p. 102).

Listed below are the researcher's professional qualifications and training.

1. The researcher taught middle school children for 4 years, serving as team leader the last two.

2. The researcher has completed 14 years of public school administration, serving both as a middle school assistant principal and an elementary principal. Primary responsibilities have been in the areas of supervision and instructional leadership.

3. The researcher has taken two courses in qualitative research methodology.

4. The researcher has participated with the Alachua Teacher Assistance Program Coordinating Council.

Each researcher brings to his research a set of biases. The following list describes biases inherent in this case study.

1. The researcher believes that teachers experiencing dysfunction in the classroom can and should be helped.

2. The researcher has been influenced by the research tradition called symbolic interactionism. According to

symbolic interactionism theory, meanings are learned through
social interaction and groups develop shared meanings.

3. The researcher assumes that the perceptions and shared
meanings of persons holding different roles within the
teacher assistance process may vary widely.

Validity

In this particular research, a multiple case study approach was
used. Yin (1984, p. 53) referred to this design as a
multiple-embedded case study. Multiple refers to a case study
conducted at more than one site or with several subjects. Embedded
designs utilize more than one unit of analysis. That is, data are
analyzed first separately for each site and then analyzed as a total
set. More specifically, each site where a teacher assistance program
occurred was described and was considered a subunit of the larger
case, which was Florida Teacher Assistance Programs. Yin cautioned
that in this type of study particular attention must be given to
maintaining construct validity. This is accomplished by using
"evidence from two or more sources, but converging on the same set of
facts or findings" (p. 78). In order to strengthen construct
validity, this study included the following data sources: (a) survey
data, (b) interview data, (c) archival records, and (d) document
collection.

Two additional methods of maintaining the validity of the
researcher's findings were to discuss findings with some of the

participants and with a panel of peer educators. By sharing findings
with some of the participants involved in the case study, the
researcher was able to receive feedback regarding his interpretations
of their perspectives. Lastly, sharing findings and receiving
suggestions from a panel of peer educators gave continuous direction
to the researcher.

Sample of the Study

All 67 school districts in Florida were sampled by the researcher
in January 1988. A mailed written questionnaire was utilized as the
initial instrument for data collection. (For additional information,
see sections on Instrument Development and Procedures). Initially, 41
districts responded. Follow-up efforts (second mailing and telephone
contacts) obtained the data shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Response to Written Questionnaires

	Percentage of Response
First written survey	61%
Follow-up written survey (containing same content as above)	7%
Telephone survey (information obtained verbally)	20%
No response	12%
Total	100%

Information regarding the procedure by which the researcher identified the sites of the descriptive case studies may be found in the section entitled procedures. Described in the next section of this chapter is the development of the written questionnaire and survey guide utilized in this case study.

Instrument Development

Development of the Teacher Assistance Program Questionnaire

The initial written instrument used in the survey, The Teacher Assistance Program Questionnaire (Appendix A), was based on a review of the literature on existing teacher assistance programs. It consisted of eight questions developed by the researcher and a panel of educators. The questions were designed to determine levels of district involvement in teacher assistance programs. The researcher designed the instrument by soliciting input from administrators in the Alachua County School System whose areas of expertise are teacher assistance and development. Their input was sought regarding the design of the instrument and the phrasing of the questions. Additional assistance was provided the researcher by the Director of Research and Evaluation for the School Board of Alachua County. His suggestions included rephrasing several items and shortening the instrument in order to obtain an increased response rate.

Development of the Interview Guide

Subsequent to collection of data with the Teacher Assistance Program Questionnaire, efforts to prepare for the collection of

interview data were begun. In order to focus responses from key
informants on their experiences with teacher assistance during the
second stage of data collection, an interview guide was prepared. In
discussing the advantages and utility of conducting interviews with a
prepared guide, Patton (1980) explained that

> an interview guide is a list of questions or issues
> that are to be explored in the course of an interview.
> An interview is prepared in order to make sure that
> basically the same information is obtained from a
> number of people by covering the same material.
> The interview guide provides topics or subject areas
> within which the interviewer is free to explore,
> probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and
> illuminate that particular subject. . . . The
> advantage of an interview guide is that it makes
> sure that the interviewer/evaluator has carefully
> decided how best to utilize the limited time
> available in an interview situation. The interview
> guide helps make interviewing across a number of
> different people more systematic and comprehensive
> by delimiting the issues to be discussed in the
> interview. (p. 200)

Lofland (1971) presented various examples of interview guides.
Lofland's book Analyzing Social Settings is "a positive set of
suggestions and instructions" for conducting qualitative field work
(p. vii).

Utilizing input from Patton, Lofland, and a field research
seminar, an interview guide was prepared and then submitted to a panel
of educators with experience in using interviews as a research
collection device. Their suggestions for revisions were incorporated
into the final interview guide. The interview guide was then pilot

tested with three Alachua County educators who are involved in teacher assistance. Problems or concerns with the results of the guided interviews in Alachua County were addressed and modifications were made prior to utilization in other school districts.

Procedures

Sampling with the Teacher Assistance Program Questionnaire

In January 1988, all 67 school districts in Florida were surveyed by mailing the Teacher Assistance Program Questionnaire to each district's director of personnel. The 8-item questionnaire (see Appendix A) focused on the existence of a teacher assistance program (TAP) within the school district or a district's interest in teacher assistance. The questionnaire was designed such that an affirmative response to question one indicated the presence of a teacher assistance program. A cover letter, which was mailed with the questionnaire (see Appendix A), indicated the researcher would personally contact all districts who responded affirmatively to question one which asked if the district had a fully operational or pilot program of teacher assistance. Question two asked for the name of the administrator who supervised the program. Questions three through eight on the questionnaire sought information regarding teacher assistance from those districts that responded negatively to question one, that is that did not report a program of teacher assistance. These questions were designed to assess a district's

awareness of and interest in teacher assistance. Results of questions three through eight are displayed in Table 3, Chapter 4). Access and response rate were facilitated by the utilization of a cover letter from the superintendent of the Alachua County School System, Dr. Douglas P. Magann (see Appendix B). Dr. Magann's letter encouraged his colleagues to support the research effort by responding to the questionnaire that was attached.

Officials from 59 districts responded to the researcher's questionnaire. Eight districts did not respond to efforts on the researcher's part to obtain information. Fourteen districts indicated the presence of a teacher assistance program.

Selecting the Case Sites

The director of personnel in each of the 14 counties which reported teacher assistance programs was contacted by the researcher. In a telephone interview, each director was asked to describe how teacher assistance was provided in their county. If the director's description met the definition of teacher assistance as defined in Chapter I of this dissertation, the district's program was included in this case study. Seven districts in the state were found to have teacher assistance programs meeting the definition of this study. Two of the seven districts, however, had not as yet placed a teacher into the assistance program. All five districts with active teacher assistance programs were included in this case study.

Interview Procedures

In each district in the sample, the researcher interviewed three or more respondents from the following five groups: district staff, union officials, school-level administrators, assistance team members, and teachers receiving assistance. An interview guide was utilized with all respondents (see Appendix C). In addition, anecdotal notes on single sheets were made during the course of the interviews. Although interview transcripts served as the primary data source for this case study, taking anecdotal notes enabled the researcher to record his impressions as the interview occurred. These notes, impressions, and identification of themes gave additional perspective when attempting to analyze the transcripts. All notes were compiled in a notebook for later analysis. An example of anecdotal notes can be found in Appendix C.

A total of 16 respondents were interviewed. They included three principals, five directors of personnel, two teachers who had received assistance, three union leaders, and three subject area specialists serving as team members (i.e., providing assistance to a teacher as part of a collegial group).

All interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed by a professional service with expertise in transcription. The interviews ranged in length from 15 minutes to 47 minutes. Additional information on teacher assistance programs was provided by securing a

written copy of each district's teacher assistance plan. Another data
source was obtained from archival records of teacher assistance
provided to this researcher by two of the districts visited (see Table
5, Chapter 4 for an example). The next section of this chapter
contains a description of how data were analyzed.

<u>Data Analysis</u>

Methods used in design and analysis applied suggestions from
several sources (Bogdon & Biklen, 1982; Jacob, 1987; Spradley, 1980;
Yin, 1982). Specific methods were selected to provide detailed
descriptions of the characteristics of teacher assistance programs
while simultaneously identifying the perceptions of participants
involved in them. Interview data were the primary source. These data
were supplemented by survey data, archival records, and document
collection.

In order to analyze participant perceptions and describe
characteristics of teacher assistance programs, a modified form of
Spradley's (1980) Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) was utilized
by this researcher. Specifically, the first five steps of Spradley's
DRS were employed to identify the meanings of participants in teacher
assistance programs were attributing to being a part of such a
program. The first five steps of the DRS are locating a social
situation, doing participant observation, making an ethnographic
record, making descriptive observation, and making a domain analysis.
These first five steps of the DRS are described in the sections
immediately following.

Locating a Social Situation

Spradley (1980) wrote that each investigator will have different reasons for selecting a particular setting for research. In this case study, because the researcher was interested in describing the status of teacher assistance programs in the State of Florida, settings were identified rather than chosen. As previously discussed in this chapter, the settings or case study sites included all school districts with active teacher assistance programs which met the definition of TAPS as defined in Chapter I.

Doing Participant Observation

In this case study, participant observation was approached from the interview-interviewee perspective. During the course of each interview, respondents were observed and anecdotal notes maintained. All interviews were mechanically recorded for data analysis.

Making an Ethnographic Record

Field notes were an important part of the research sequence. Spradley (1980) listed three principles for consideration when writing field notes, the verbatim principle, the language identification principle, and the concrete principle.

The verbatim principle referred to getting things down word for word. In this area, the field notes were enhanced and supplemented by tape recording and subsequent transcription.

In discussing the language identification principle, Spradley (1980, p. 66) recommended paying careful attention to language usage

and emphasized the perspective the researcher may gain when noting different terms used by respondents in describing the same or similar social situations. An example of this principle found by the researcher was when teachers spoke of joining or volunteering for teacher assistance programs while administrators discussed putting and placing teachers into teacher assistance programs.

The concrete principle referred to using as much specific detail as possible when writing field notes. Spradley also mentioned expanding, filling out, or enlarging field notes. Here again mechanical recordings were utilized to help expand field notes.

Making Descriptive Observations

Making descriptive observations referred to entering a social situation with a general broad question rather than a very narrow one. In this case study, the researcher entered the case sites with eight very broad interview questions which were in the form of a single sheet interview guide (see Appendix D). The interview guide was designed to elicit data regarding teacher assistance programs and the responses of the informants upon those areas of most interest to the researcher.

Making a Domain Analysis—Enhancing Validity

Spradley (1980, p. 85) described analysis as a search for patterns. Domain analysis is a specific attempt to identify patterns through a compilation of categories. Subsequent to typing

and transcribing all field interviews and after continuous reading of the transcripts, some general categories or domains were identified by the researcher. Initially, all categories were listed individually. Examples of these initial categories were things that produced stress, money factors, release time, collegial perspective, things producing change, strengths, shortcomings, management perspective, emotional issues, and union support.

Next, domains were developed and analyzed by the roles of those interviewed, e.g., administrators, team members, teachers, and union officials. Additionally, the strengths and weaknesses of TAPs as articulated by each of these groups were coded.

Upon finalization of these categories of analysis, the search for relationships between and across categories was begun by preparing domain analysis sheets (see Appendix E). These sheets were used to examine the fourth of Spradley's (1980) nine general semantic relationships for data analysis (p. 104). This relationship, as described by Bradley, is X is a reason for doing Y. By applying data from the written transcripts to domain analysis sheets, patterns and commonalities within the respondent's interviews could be more readily identified. For example, principals' and teachers' responses to the same questions could be examined, compared to each other, and then compared to the responses of other role groups involved in the teacher assistance process.

<u>Summary</u>

As mentioned previously in this chapter, construct validity can be enhanced when data from two or more sources are utilized, thereby producing a triangulation of data. In this study, single page, anecdotal notes were examined and compared with coded interview transcripts. This comparison reinforced and clarified findings which will be presented in Chapter IV. In addition, written plans of assistance from each school district were collected and assistance as described in the written plan was compared to actual interview findings.

Since this was an embedded design, all cases (districts) were coded individually and then coded across cases. In addition, construct validity in this case study was enhanced through utilization of domain analysis sheets and collection of documents and archival records.

The three phases of this research study permitted the researcher to examine the "meanings" which members of the various role groups, i.e., district staff, union officials, assistance team members, school-level administrators, and teachers receiving assistance had developed and which influenced their perceptions. The research tradition of symbolic interaction provided the framework for identifying the perspectives held by the various role groups involved in the assistance process.

Presented in Chapter III were an explanation of the research perspective, case study methodology, the sample, instrument development, procedures, and data analysis. The results of the study are presented in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV
RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this case study was to determine the scope and describe the characteristics of teacher assistance programs within the state of Florida. The findings, which are presented in three sections, were obtained from the following data sources: (a) survey data, (b) interview data, (c) archival records, and (d) document collection.

Survey data were collected from 59 Florida counties. Taped interviews were conducted in the five counties where existing teacher assistance programs met the criteria for inclusion in this study. Written records and documents were also collected during the course of this case study. Specifically, written copies of assistance plans were collected from four of the five counties studied. Archival records (see Table 5 for an example) of teacher assistance were obtained from two of the five counties with active teacher assistance programs. The first portion of this chapter presents results from the Teacher Assistance Program Questionnaire. The second section presents results from individual case sites. The third section presents results of cross-case analysis.

Results of the Teacher Assistance Program Questionnaire

Scope of Teacher Assistance Programs

In the first section of Chapter IV, the first research question is addressed and background information for research questions two and three is provided. Research question one is: What is the status of teacher assistance programs in the state of Florida? (a) How many counties have implemented a teacher assistance program? (b) How many counties are planning to implement a teacher assistance program?

In January 1988, directors of personnel in all 67 districts in Florida were surveyed by this researcher regarding the existence of teacher assistance programs. Initially, 41 districts responded to the researcher's survey. Follow-up written and telephone requests resulted in an additional 18 district responses. In Table 2, the results of the researcher's contacts with school districts regarding the presence of a teacher assistance program are displayed. Of the responses received from 59 of the 67 districts, respondents from 14 districts indicated the presence of some form of teacher assistance program.

Question two on the written survey was addressed to respondents from the 14 districts who indicated yes to the presence of a teacher assistance program. These respondents were asked to indicate the name of the administrator who supervised the program in their district.

Table 2

School Districts Initially Indicating the Presence of a
Teacher Assistance Program

	Number of respondents	Districts indicating the existence of a program
First written survey	41	9
Second written survey	5	1
Telephone survey	13	4
No response	8	0
Totals	67	14

Questions three through eight on the survey pertained only to
districts where the respondent indicated a negative response to the
presence of a teacher assistance program. In question three, the
respondent was asked to indicate whether or not he or she perceived
the implementation of a teacher assistance program to be feasible,
necessary, or helpful in his or her school district. Of the 21
responses obtained, 14 (or 67%) of the respondents believed teacher
assistance programs were feasible. Approximately half of the
respondents indicated teacher assistance programs were necessary.
Sixteen (or 76%) of the respondents believed a teacher assistance
program would be helpful. Responses to survey item three are
displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Response to Survey Item 3

	Yes	No
Would a program of teacher assistance be		
feasible?	14	7
necessary?	11	10
helpful?	16	5

Through survey questions four through seven, the researcher attempted to ascertain the level of awareness regarding teacher assistance programs within the respondent's district. As indicated in Table 4, awareness of teacher assistance programs within the 21 districts responding to items four through seven was low.

Subsequent to obtaining the responses indicated in Table 2, the researcher contacted the directors of personnel in each of the 14 counties who responded affirmatively to the presence of a teacher assistance program. Each director was asked to describe how teacher assistance was provided in that county. If the director's description included four of the following five criteria, the district was included in the subsequent case study: (a) a philosophical belief that management has an obligation in teacher assistance, (b) collegial

involvement, (c) a team approach, (d) administrative involvement, and (e) union involvement. Application of these five criteria identified seven counties with teams of collegial educators involved (usually with union participation) in programs of process–oriented teacher assistance. Two counties whose teacher assistance programs met these criteria had not yet placed a teacher in the program. (These two counties were, therefore, not included in this case study.) Descriptions of how programs operate and summaries of the perceptions of participants are found in the next section of this chapter.

Table 4

Response to Survey Questions 4–7

	Yes	No
Have you read about teacher assistance programs in professional literature?	9	12
Do you know of a school district in Florida that has a teacher assistance program?	4	17
Have you visited a school district seeking information on a teacher assistance program?	1	20
Has a teacher assistance program ever been discussed at the bargaining table in your district?	1	20

Results from Individual Case Sites

This section of the chapter focuses on the results of research questions two and three. Specifically, question two was stated as: What are the characteristics of teacher assistance programs used in this study? (a) How do these programs operate? (b) Who is involved in teacher assistance programs? Question three was stated as: What are the perceptions of participants in teacher assistance programs? (a) What are the perceptions of district staff? (b) What are the perceptions of consulting team members? (c) What are the perceptions of teachers receiving assistance?

There is evidence that teachers are willing to receive help from colleagues when they are experiencing academic difficulty (Alfonso & Goldberry, 1982; Cutter & Grossnickle, 1984; Jenson, 1981). The findings of how five school districts in the state of Florida administer teacher assistance are reported in the following section of this chapter. Each district's program of teacher assistance is described and respondents' interviews are summarized in such a way as to highlight the characteristics of that district's program of teacher assistance while simultaneously focusing on the respondent's perceptions.

<div align="center">County P's Assistance Program</div>

Introduction

P County is a large school district employing over 13,000 instructional and noninstructional personnel. The large size of the

district and logistical concerns with obtaining performance review
assistance from the State Department of Education were cited by both
union and management officials as a rationale for management's
implementation of the Intensive Care and Assistance Program.

The logistical concerns described by management and union
representatives with the State Department of Education's performance
review process involved timelines and duration of assistance.
Specifically, the lack of availability of supervisors from the State
Department of Education frequently produced situations where months,
or even a year or more, was required before performance review could
be implemented. In addition, representatives of both union and
management voiced concerns about the brevity (three days on site) of
the typical performance review provided by the State Department of
Education. The Intensive Care and Assistance Program was seen as a
more flexible, timely program with sufficient duration (eight or more
weeks) to better address the needs of the local district.

Program Description

County P implemented its teacher assistance program in March,
1986. Requests for teacher assistance (also called assistance review
in the district) are initiated by a building level principal and are
referred to the director of personnel. The director of personnel
reviews documentation forwarded by the principal to verify the level
of assistance at the school level which has been rendered up to that

point. Documentation may include such things as letters of memorandum, evaluation forms, offers of professional inservice, and written suggestions for improvement.

Subsequent to examining the documentation and discussing the referral with the principal, the area superintendent and the assistant superintendent for personnel services, the director either refers the request for assistance to the district's superintendent or informs the building principal that additional informal assistance at the building level is indicated. Additional informal assistance could include counseling the individual, having the individual work with a subject or grade-level chairperson, or involving supervisors from the district level with specific expertise in the area in which the individual is experiencing dysfunction. Next, the superintendent of County P personally discusses each referral for assistance with the director and decides to either continue informal assistance or authorizes the review and assistance process. If assistance is recommended, then a five-step assistance process is initiated (see Appendix C).

The following description is excerpted from P County's pamphlet entitled "Intensive Care and Assistance Program for Instructional Personnel" (Personnel Department, P County School Board, no date):

> Step One - Those members of the assistance team selected
> for reviewing performance will meet with the reviewee
> and visit the work site for the purpose of data
> collection, using appropriate techniques, instruments,
> and documents as approved by the assistance team.

Step Two - Following performance reviews, the assistance team will meet for the purpose of reaching concensus regarding collected performance data.

Step Three - Assistance activities shall be designed and selected by the assistance team. Weekly meetings of the assistance team will be held to authorize assistance activities and to share performance data. Special emphasis is placed on the importance of these regular meetings to ensure program integrity and continuity. The reviewee will be included in all assistance team meetings. Steps two and three become a continuing process with reinforcement through regular meetings of the assistance team.

Step Four - At the conclusion of the six-week assistance program, the director of personnel services and the assistance team will meet to review program documentation and to recommend appropriate action.

Step Five - The superintendent makes one of the following decisions: (a) Conclude performance effective. Plan follow-up review. (b) Authorize additional assistance. (c) Recommend reassignment to more appropriate position. (d) Withhold recommendation for annual reappointment. (e) Performance unacceptable. Recommend filing charges for dismissal. (f) Recommend acceptance of reviewee's resignation. (p. 5)

As of June 1988, three teachers in County P had completed the Intensive Care and Assistance Program. A total of three interviews were conducted in P County. A summary of each interview follows this section.

P County Interviews

Perceptions of the Director of Personnel. An interview with John Jones,[1] P County's Director of Personnel, was held in the spring of

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[1]The names of all places and people in this report have been changed to assure the anonymity of participants.

1988 on site in P County. In response to a question posed to ascertain why the district implemented the assistance program, Mr. Jones stated:

> Basically, because of the size of our system, we were concerned that whenever we needed special assistance-type reviews we needed to contact the state. Its our feeling based on the knowledge of our staff and the fact that they are used widely throughout the state on such things as governor's committees and D.O.E. committees that we had the expertise necessary to carry out such assistance. Also, we felt that we could design a program to run over a longer period of time and get a truer picture of what
>
> was actually occurring with a teacher experiencing performance problems than an assistance person from the state department could do in a three-day stint in our county.

In discussing how the program operated, Mr. Jones stressed the importance of documenting assistance provided by the building principal and other building level administrators. He stressed that documenting assistance served two functions. The first function was to establish and verify a need for assistance beyond that which would be provided informally at the building level. In other words, it served to establish the need for placement into a formal program after assistance efforts had failed at the building level. The second function was to maintain the credibility of the program by serving those teachers who have not been helped by other means.

Jones further stated:

> We do not want this to turn into a catch all for any situation that a principal chooses not to confront. I have made it clear in discussing it with principals that we will not be manipulated in that way. The fact

that they want a teacher in the assistance program and
recommend that to me does not in any way, shape, or
form mean that I will recommend it to the superintendent.
Until I am convinced it has been addressed, it has been
identified, I will not make that recommendation.
That means they are going to have to bite the bullet
before they get to us. They are going to have to reflect
the problem in conferences and conference summaries. If
its a serious ongoing problem, they are going to have to
reflect that in memos that are very directive to that
teacher. If all those things don't work and inservice
is not sufficient, if observations by peer teachers are
not effective in making changes, then we consider stepping
in as a district to work with that teacher.

Mr. Jones described an assistance process wherein the superintendent

personally approves each referral and then sends a letter to each

assistance team member stating that the assistance review is to be

given the highest priority. The importance of all team members being

actively involved in the observation and note-taking process within

the teacher's classroom was also stressed. Mr. Jones particularly

emphasized the involuntary nature of the teacher's placement into an

Intensive Care and Assistance Program. He said "this is not a

voluntary thing on the teacher's part. Some are pleased to get

assistance, some are reluctant!"

Mr. Jones shared this incident with the researcher to underscore

the difficulty of working with involuntary participants. He described

a situation during the past school year in which the teacher being

assisted stated "well, I need to tell you right up front that you're

not going to make a warm fuzzy out of me." The reason the teacher had

been placed in the program was because of his style of teaching. The

teacher was harsh, demanding, and intimidating to his high school math students. He created a climate of intimidation and anxiety while producing an extremely high failure rate. The teacher's belligerent, aggressive attitude toward assistance and his unwillingness to change were precisely what were producing his inability to relate to students.

Mr. Jones identified three strengths of the Intensive Care and Assistance Program. "Being able to put together a team of educators, including principals, subject area specialists, supervisors, directors, curriculum coordinators, and union representatives, to provide help. . . . obtaining greater validity of teaching performance when observed by a team of experts. . . . increasing the credibility and applicability of recommendations when made by a team of educators collaboratively."

When asked to discuss weaknesses of the program, Mr. Jones said:

It's more a frustration than a weakness. Trying to get middle and top level managers together at the same time and place is difficult. What saves us there, however, is that Dr. Sims, our superintendent, considers this a priority. Dr. Sims believes that teachers who are experiencing classroom difficulties must be remediated or dismissed. This support should include funding. A teacher assistance program requires a staff and can involve money for release time for teachers for observation and consultation. What Dr. Sims considers a priority we usually consider a priority.

When asked for advice to a district contemplating the implementation of a teacher assistance program, Mr. Jones listed the

several points for consideration. First, school districts where such programs are in place and where several individuals have experienced the assistance process should be contacted. Next, the district superintendent's full support should be secured. After the district superintendent has agreed to fund and implement a teacher assistance program, modifications should be made to the program and the program should be tailored to fit the needs of the individual school district. Finally, provide options for participating teachers rather than just looking for a clean bill of health or dismissal.

   Union uncertainty. P County's paid director of the local teacher's union was interviewed at her office in the union's office suite. The director prefaced the interview by emphasizing that she had just completed participating in an entire assistance review with one of her union members. In reflecting upon why the district had implemented an assistance program, Mrs. Nancy, the union representative, said "we believe their intent was to help teachers. Possibly to discipline teachers. We're not totally sure—we were not involved enough."

   Mrs. Nancy's description of how the assistance program operated was consistent with the Director of Personnel's description. Her focus in describing the process was on classroom observations and the opportunities they provided for obtaining convergent or divergent viewpoints.

She described as beneficial the process in P County wherein a number of subject area supervisors and consultants go into the teacher's classroom and make suggestions and comments regarding such things as classroom organization, lesson delivery, student monitoring, and discipline. Mrs. Nancy added:

> There were either six or eight meetings with one teacher
> that I actually came across, every single week the
> teacher was observed by at least one or two individuals.
> The principal did some observations, the county staff
> did some observations, and the area supervisor did some
> observations. The teacher also was sent to several
> schools to observe teachers that were supposedly
> excellent in the areas they were being observed in.
> I believe receiving feedback and doing observations
> gave the teacher some fresh approaches to teaching.

When asked to describe strengths of the program, Mrs. Nancy stated:

> Teachers are having pointed out their areas of weakness
> and are being encouraged to improve these weaknesses.
> Also the teacher I was with was able to observe other
> teachers. This gives teachers the opportunity to see
> how various teaching styles, perhaps ones similar to
> theirs, were perceived by students and others.

A team member's perspective. Mr. Reeg, a high school principal, was interviewed in his office in P County. Mr. Reeg had just completed participating in the Intensive Care and Assistance process with one of his teachers. He indicated that he attended all team sessions during the course of the assistance process. It appeared to this researcher, based upon the preciseness of his answer, the long pauses between answers, and his frowning demeanor, that Mr. Reeg was

less comfortable in responding to the interviewer's questions than the personnel director or the director of the teachers' union.

Mr. Reeg's response to a question regarding why his district implemented a program of teacher assistance elicited the following response:

> I think to try to clear up some long-standing problems a few instructional personnel may have. It's not something the county views as using with a lot of people. It's something to use with someone with a documented history of not being able to adapt, not being able to change—hardcore cases.

When asked to describe the strengths of the assistance program, Mr. Reeg replied:

> My experience has been minimal. We've only had one person in it and that was at the end of the year. There's been no opportunity really to see whether there's been any improvement. I would say the process is a positive one. I mean, the person that was put in the program reacted in a positive manner to people's suggestions. I wonder whether this person will respond with positive changes next year.

When asked to describe weaknesses of the assistance program, Mr. Reeg initially said, "I don't know this early whether we can name strengths and weaknesses." Mr. Reeg described scheduling the team and matching calendars as a concern.

When asked to summarize his thoughts regarding P County's program of Intensive Care and Assistance, Mr. Reeg praised the composition of the assistance committee. He believed that building level, county level, and union participation was a very positive way

in which to attempt remediation. He specifically referred to all facets of the educational community focusing on a common task.

Mr. Reeg further stated:

I liked the idea of all those facets having the opportunity to observe the subject and come up with the same thing. It's nice to have somebody from another level support what you've been saying for years when you're trying to get some behavioral changes.

In response to a question regarding aspects of the program which he disliked, Mr. Reeg remarked:

It's difficult sometimes to work with someone you've been unable to work with at other times in other ways. Its difficult when you get into these personnel problems. That part isn't super but other than that I can't say anything. Its all been pretty positive!

Mr. Reeg's concerns about working with someone in an assistance program with whom you've had a previous working relationship were also mentioned by Mr. David and Mrs. Sanford, two school administrators whose interviews are part of Q and F counties' case studies, respectively. In both of the latter cases, the concern proved to be more of an apprehension prior to assistance than a reality during the course of the assistance process.

Summary

The final question in the interview guide sought advice for a district which is considering the implementation of a teacher assistance program. This item also provided a final opportunity for the informants to identify their perspectives and priorities.

All three respondents, union official, school district administrator, and building principal, responded favorably to the structure of P County's Intensive Care and Assistance Program. Their individual concerns were as follows. Mr. Reeg saw a benefit from different people with different educational areas of expertise being involved in assistance. He also saw three or four educators' convergent opinions as having more power and credibility with an individual teacher when a change in teaching behavior was the desired outcome.

Mrs. Nancy saw union involvement in the process as essential to keeping the assistance program viable. Her exact words were

> We should have been asked to sit in on the development
> of the program. Our members look at us as if we bought
> into it, when we really had nothing to do with its
> development. However, as long as the ultimate goal
> of the program is to assist the teachers, the program
> can do nothing but help the teachers.

Mr. Jones, the Director of Personnel, believed the entire process could only be viable if the superintendent endorsed and believed in the process. Mr. Jones went on to say

> In order to be successful you must convince people
> that this is an important human resources program in
> the district. We don't just fire people; its wasteful,
> expensive and not always productive, because in the
> hearing process we don't always win. It's a win to
> make a marginally competent teacher a strong teacher.

County Q's Assistance Program

Introduction

County Q is a small rural district in the northern part of the state. There are 17 schools in Q County. The school board of Q

county adopted a teacher assistance program prior to the beginning of the 1987-88 school year. Participants can be placed into the program on either a voluntary or involuntary basis. The shortage of teachers in this district and the positive benefit of remediating marginal teachers were cited by the director of personnel as reasons for implementing a teacher assistance program.

The director continued by expressing her belief that, if a statewide teacher shortage becomes a reality, identifying, remediating, and retaining marginal teachers would have a positive impact on Q County's teaching force. Three benefits of teacher remediation and retention were described. First, the district does not have to recruit as many new people. Second, the district does not have as many new people to "work through" the certification process. Third, consistency in faculties is better than if the district experiences constant turnover of employees.

Program Description

The principal evaluates personnel at the building level and notes deficiencies. Assistance is begun for individuals with significant deficiencies. This assistance may consist of writing a Professional Development Plan for improvement, help from another teacher on staff or help from the appropriate director or supervisor at the county level. (Prior to being placed in the district level assistance program the employee must have received extensive assistance at the school level.)

If assistance at the school level does not produce the desired improvement, documentation is forwarded to the superintendent with a request for placement in the assistance program. Upon the superintendent's concurrence with the recommendation, a team is appointed to provide assistance. Team members are chosen by the superintendent and always include the building principal and assistant principal where applicable.

After the team is appointed, an organizational meeting is held. The director of personnel orients the team members to the process and discusses what their role is to be. During the next 8 weeks the team meets with the teacher weekly to discuss that week's observations and any progress that has been made.

The majority of the observations during the 8-week assistance program are performed by the building level administrators. County level personnel perform observations also, but not each week. The primary function of the county-level administrators is to brainstorm suggestions for improvement and participate in the recommendation from the team which occurs after 8 weeks of assistance. Upon the completion of 8 weeks in the program, the team recommends (a) conclusion with a notation of success, (b) an additional 8 weeks of assistance, (c) reassignment to another school, or (d) begin the termination process.

Q County Interviews

Perceptions of the Director of Personnel. An interview with Mary

Shell, Q County's Director of Personnel, was held April 22, 1988, at

the director's office.

In response to a question aimed at ascertaining why the district

implemented the assistance program, Mrs. Shell stated:

> Several reasons, one being, of course, all we hear about
> a potential teacher shortage in Florida. If we have
> teachers out there that have some type of deficiency we
> need to correct, then its to our advantage to have some
> type of structured program to give them so we can keep
> them in our county. This will, of course, cause several
> things to happen: (a) you don't have to recruit as many
> new people, (b) you don't have all those new people
> you're having to work through all the certification hoops,
> and (c) faculties will be better if you don't have
> constant turnover of employees from year to year.

Mary Shell described the strengths of Q County's program as (a)

providing teachers the opportunity to have fellow educators observe

what is going on in the classroom, and (b) causing the importance of

improvement to come to the forefront of the individual teacher's mind

merely by implementing the program. Weaknesses identified by Mr.

Shell were logistical ones. Consumption of time and a district policy

which does not allow taping team meetings were specifically mentioned.

"Pressure was always there"—a teacher's perspective. Ms. Celia

Star was interviewed by the researcher in her elementary school

classroom on April 22, 1988. Ms. Star prefaced the interview by

describing why she had been placed in the assistance program:

> I asked for it! I had asked for help before. I felt
> I was having problems with classroom management and

the flow or transition of my subjects from one to another.

Ms. Star listed two strengths of the Assistance Program: (a) it caused her to become closer to her principal and assistant principal and (b) the feedback caused her self-confidence and self-esteem to improve. She described the assistance process overall as a positive shot in the arm!

When asked to describe weaknesses of the program, Ms. Star replied, "not having a peer teacher on the team. I felt like I was on trial. It was a scary feeling. I know I'm a better teacher for it." When probed to elaborate, Ms. Star described an "inquisition-type" feeling of intense pressure which she experienced from time to time during the course of assistance. She summarized her feelings about the assistance program as follows: "If a teacher didn't ask for this help, they might feel picked on. But I asked for the program. I went into it with kind of an open mind."

The assistant principal's perspective. Mr. Buck David was the assistant principal at Ms. Star's elementary school. The school has two separate campuses and Mr. David was responsible for all operations at his campus. Mr. David's interview took place in his office on April 22, 1988.

Mr. David characterized Q County's program of teacher assistance as being very positive. He discussed some initial apprehension about having to go through the program with a teacher for the first time.

He cited two reasons for his apprehension. One, his lack of familiarity with the program which had just been implemented in Q County and, two, the realization that if the assistance process were unsuccessful, termination of the teacher would likely occur. He summarized his feelings by saying "the program brought lots of good ideas and that two or more heads are definitely better than one."

Mr. David responded to a question regarding weaknesses or potential weaknesses of the program by stating:

> You're going to have employees who might not look at it
> in a positive mode. Negative attitudes may emerge.
> You're going to have employees who at one time or
> another were successful teachers but due to burnout
> or situations in life now are not.
> Hopefully, administrators won't utilize this program
> in a negative manner. It needs to be closely
> scrutinized by the county staff.

Summary

Two areas of divergent thinking were evident upon conclusion of the guided interviews in Q County. The teacher receiving assistance perceived the need for a peer teacher on the assistance team as the highest priority need, while administration never mentioned it. The teacher believed she had entirely self-referred for assistance while the school's administrator saw it as a shared decision.

Areas of consensus in Q County were the joint benefits derived by teachers and administrators working together for improvement and the overall positive aspect of the program, despite the intermittent feelings of pressure experienced by Ms. Star.

County D's Assistance Program

Introduction

The composition and administration of teacher assistance (known locally as Technical Assistance) is unique in D County. D County implements its assistance program through the local Teacher Education Center (TEC). The TEC, which provides inservice training, professional development opportunities, and beginning teacher training, also provides technical assistance for continuing contract teachers who are experiencing a dysfunction related to their classroom teaching. The researcher drew upon three onsite interviews and written artifacts (see Appendix D) to ascertain how D County's program of technical assistance functions.

Program Description

Technical Assistance is initiated by a teacher's self-referral or by a building principal's request; the request for assistance is forwarded to the Teacher Education Center. Once a request is forwarded to the Teacher Education Center, a team consisting of a subject area specialist, a representative of the TEC, a building level administrator (not always the teacher's) and a peer teacher is assembled. As of May 1988, nine teachers had received technical assistance in D County. Two teachers had self-referred and seven had been referred to the TEC by their building-level administrator.

The team members' first task is to conduct formative observations in the teacher's classroom. The formative observation instrument used

in D County consisted of a set of generic teaching competencies similar to the state of Florida's Beginning Teacher Competencies. Upon completion of the formative observations, the team and teacher discuss the deficiencies noted and brainstorm suggestions for improvement. A Professional Development Plan is written prescribing activities which need to occur for improvement. Eight weeks after the implementation of the Professional Development Plan another series of formative observations are performed by the Technical Assistance Team.

After comparing all formative observations and noting progress made by the teacher, the team makes a recommendation that either no further assistance needed as all deficiencies have been corrected. The team might also recommend the assistance should be continued for a specified number of weeks. In instances where little progress toward remediating deficiencies has been observed, the team will recommend terminating the assistance and initiating formal dismissal procedures.

D County's Interviews

Union support. In D County the recently elected teacher's union president declined to be interviewed regarding the technical assistance program, citing his lack of personal expertise in that area. He did, however, refer the researcher to another union member who is currently on the TEC advisory council and is a recent D County "teacher of the year." The following is a summation of the teacher's (Mrs. May) perceptions of D County's technical assistance program.

In response to a question aimed at ascertaining why D County implemented its program of technical assistance for teachers, Mrs. May stated:

> It's part of our plan for excellence; we're very forward thinking in D County in what we are looking to achieve with our teachers. We want to provide the best quality education and with that in mind you have to know the teacher as a person. If they're in a classroom the more assistance we can provide that teacher to do a better job with all of the situations that come up on a day to day basis than the better job they're going to do and, therefore, improve the education of the student.

When asked to describe the strengths of the technical assistance program, Mrs. May listed four positive aspects. First, she believed the program provided a nonthreatening environment. Also, nothing from observations is used as summative data. That is to say that observation data are collected only for the purpose of improving teacher performance. No evaluative usage was intended nor were observation data used as part of the dismissal process. In D County, teacher assistance may fail, however, dismissal is not part of the process. If assistance fails, the superintendent may choose to initiate a competency review with personnel from the State Department of Education.

Mrs. May also stated that when working on a peer basis with a team, teachers find it less difficult to verbalize that they are having problems. Another strength she identified was that technical assistance can assist a teacher who knows how to teach but simply has

lost motivation. She went on to say that such things as constructive feedback, seeing people take an interest in their teaching, and observing good teaching practices can cause the classroom teacher to become motivated and eager to display improved teaching practices.

When asked to discuss perceived weaknesses in D County's assistance program, Mrs. May mentioned that some teachers may feel threatened by the process. Another concern cited was time constraints. She went on to add:

> There just aren't enough hours in the day. Most people who are doing this type of thing (team membership) have a lot of other responsibilities. . . . As this begins to grow, it may become hard to find other educators to come in as team members.

Mrs. May's interview was taped and transcribed via speaker phone. There were no substantive differences noted between Mrs. May's description of how the program operated in her county and those of the other professionals interviewed in D County. The Director of the Teacher Education Center and a member of an assistance team all described program logistics in a similar manner.

A team member's perspective. Mrs. Nona is the Language Arts Supervisor in D County. She has participated on three technical assistance teams. In describing how the program operated, Mrs. Nona emphasized the importance of team composition. Utilizing people who projected a very positive attitude was seen as essential for a successful outcome. In addition, having team members from the same racial group was seen as beneficial in enhancing rapport and

credibility when the teacher receiving assistance was a member of a minority racial group.

When asked to list strengths of the Technical Assistance Program, Mrs. Nona described the program as giving the teacher new life. She further stated,

> Often a teacher becomes frustrated, often its involved with burnout. When the team comes in its like a shot in the arm. The team gives the teacher new life, new avenues to look toward.
> Having other people work with you on an area you want to improve, pointing out a situation that you may not be aware of makes you a better teacher. I don't think we should keep dead wood—if dead wood isn't willing to improve. Right now I feel assistance is vital!

When asked to describe weaknesses of the program, Mrs. Nona described a problem she had experienced. The problem was, in her words, "when do you give up on the assistance program and refer the teacher who is not responding to a team for documentation and dismissal?" Mrs. Nona stated that assistance had been provided to D County teachers for as little as 6 weeks to as long as 18 months. She reiterated her sense of frustration when faced with ending assistance in situations where little or no improvement was noted. She also mentioned her own personal disappointment in being on a team that had terminated assistance without achieving the desired change in teaching behavior.

The Teacher Education Center Director's perspective. Mrs. Connie Noslow is the director of the D County TEC. She was interviewed and taped via telephone by the researcher.

In describing the program, Mrs. Noslow stressed the current informal nature of the program which is rapidly evolving into a formal one. Current practice is being described in written form and will become a formal, school board-adopted program for the 1988-89 school year. A point stressed by Mrs. Noslow was that technical assistance is not just for teachers who are marginal but rather for anyone who wanted to improve their teaching skills.

When asked to describe the strengths of the Technical Assistance program, Mrs. Noslow responded,

> When an assistance team is successful, teachers . . . buy into changing their skills. The teachers get real involved if you have a successful Technical Assistance program. They like it and they're not afraid to ask for help.

When responding to a question aimed at identifying weaknesses of the program, Mrs. Noslow identified time and personal constraints. She elaborated that the Teacher Education Center was involved with so many diverse activities that it was already difficult for her small staff (three people) to be involved directly with each request for technical assistance.

Summary

Positive, helpful interpersonal relationships were seen by all three respondents as crucial to successful technical assistance. Mrs. Bruno described the process as working friend to friend. Mrs. Nona said, "interactions are vital." The person you're talking to needs to know you're concerned about them. Mrs. Noslow said, "teachers see me

as a district level person, as a lot more credible when I go in the classroom and we work side by side."

County G's Assistance Program

Introduction

County G is a medium-sized county of approximately 1,300 teachers and 23,000 pupils. County G's teacher assistance program (GTAP) is modeled on that of Toledo, Ohio (Lawrence, 1985; McCormick, 1985). The Assistant Superintendent for Personnel in G County became aware of Toledo's program and discussed it locally with district administrators and the teacher's union. These discussions led to a joint telephone conference between Toledo union and school officials and G county union and school officials. A consensus decision to implement a program was made and G County's program of teacher assistance was adopted by the school board in 1985.

Program Description

The following is a step by step description of G County's procedure for referring a teacher for assistance and what happens during a teacher's participation in their program. Individuals are identified for placement in G-TAP in one of two ways. Either the building principal may notice deficient teaching practices during the course of the annual evaluation cycle and recommend to the faculty spokesperson placement in the program or the faculty spokesperson may approach the principal with a faculty request to place an individual in G-TAP based on collegial observations of deficient teaching

practices. In either case, if both parties are in agreement, they together inform the teacher of the recommendation. If both parties do not agree, the recommendation for assistance is not made. The following description of referral and participation in G-TAP is taken verbatim from a memorandum sent to G County principals (Personal communication, M. J. Davis, August 22, 1986).

Referral:
1. Recommendations for placement in G-Tap can be made during two times of the year: at the end of the year; at the end of the mid-year evaluation of the final evaluation period.
2. The principal and a faculty spokesperson(s) identify a candidate for possible assistance.
3. The principal and spokesperson(s) together inform the teacher of the recommendation.
4. A "Recommendation for Assistance" form is signed by both the principal and spokesperson(s) and is forwarded to the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel.
5. The Coordinating Council (CC) meets to review the recommendation and to determine if assistance is appropriate.
6. The CC notifies the teacher in writing of their decision.
7. If assistance is determined as necessary by the CC, the teacher is given an opportunity to meet with members of the CC to discuss questions they may have.
8. The teacher must then notify the CC within 5 days of his/her decision to participate.
9. The program is voluntary and if a teacher refuses to participate, the principal will revert to the observation and evaluation procedures as prescribed in the negotiated agreement.

Participation
1. If the teacher agrees to participate, they select and prioritize three names from a list of consulting teachers and submit the names to the CC.
2. The CC makes the final selection of a consulting teacher but selects the teacher's first choice if possible.
3. A meeting with the teacher needing assistance, his/her principal, consulting teacher (CT), and representatives from the CC is held to discuss program procedures.
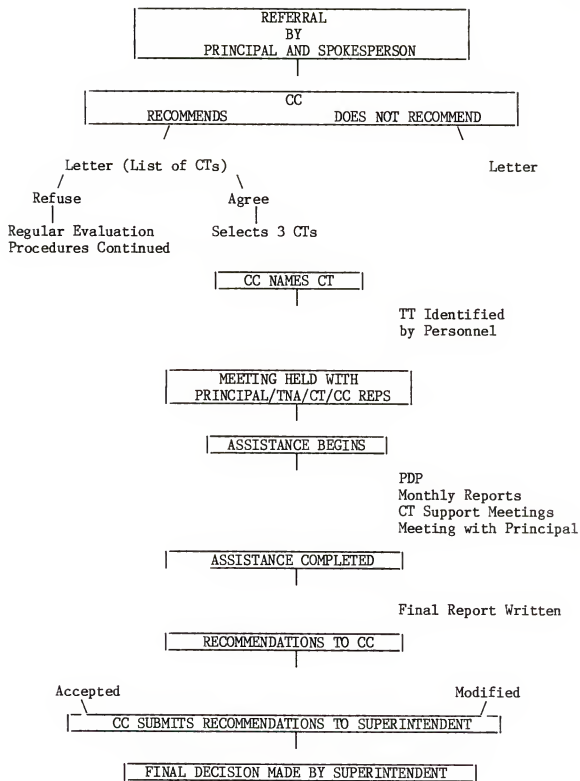
Figure 1. GTAP Teacher Assistance Program

4. A temporary teacher is identified through Personnel for the consulting teacher's classroom. The temporary teacher is placed on a day-to-day contract and assumes the regular teaching responsibilities of the CT.
5. The consulting teacher begins the period of assistance and has full responsibility for determining what occurs during this time. A Professional Development Plan is developed to identify goals for the teacher receiving assistance.
6. The consulting teacher determines when the program is terminated and submits a written report to the CC at that time.
7. The CC accepts the consulting teacher's report and makes a recommendation to the Superintendent. The Superintendent takes final action on each case.

In Figure 1, the steps of referral and participation in G County's Teacher Assistance Program from referral through final recommendations are outlined.

G County's Interviews

A consulting teacher's perceptions and experiences. Mrs. Lincoln was interviewed at her home in G County. Mrs. Lincoln's description of how teacher assistance operates in G County was consistent with the preceding step by step process. Mrs. Lincoln was able to point out one additional piece of information to the researcher. Mrs. Lincoln stressed the benefit and importance of the requirement in G County's assistance plan which stipulated that the consulting teacher (CT) spends a minimum of 45 days in the classroom of the teacher receiving assistance. (See appendix for a complete description of G County's teacher assistance program.) Mrs. Lincoln saw the minimum time requirement as integral and beneficial to successful teacher assistance.

Mrs. Lincoln amplified by stating that she believed a minimum of 45 days with a teacher allowed the consulting teacher adequate time to make a judgment as to whether "remediation" had occurred or not. She continued by stating that frequently the assistance process would require much more than 45 days in the classroom of the teacher being assisted. She also shared her belief that the 45 days allowed sufficient time for trust and rapport building between the two teachers.

When asked to discuss strengths of the teacher assistance program, Mrs. Lincoln stated:

> Teachers are being helped. Well, the bottom line is
> kids. In this case kids are getting a better teacher
> in one way or the other. Either that teacher is
> improving well enough to teach better or she's not
> going to be in the classroom, and the kids are going
> to get a better teacher otherwise. In the whole, it
> makes the profession look so much better. We are sort
> of monitoring our own.

When asked to discuss weaknesses with G County's program, Mrs. Lincoln stated:

> The weakness right now—the biggest weakness is that the
> consulting teacher still has her own classroom. Now in
> Toledo, you see, those teachers do not have a classroom.
> They're out of the classroom the year or two they are
> involved in the consulting process. Here, we don't
> get some of the best people to be consulting teachers
> because they don't want to be in and out of their
> classrooms working with a substitute while also trying
> to handle the consulting duties. We've had some people
> who won't consult again because it hurt their class too
> much.

Union perspective—"We can deal with people with problems."

Mrs. Foot, president of G County's teacher union, was interviewed in

her office on March 16, 1988. When asked to share her perspective as to the strengths of G County's assistance program, Mrs. Foot identified the biggest strength as being peer assistance for experienced teachers. She went on to describe the benefits of helping classroom teachers who have been in the classroom a number of years and, for various reasons, are experiencing some difficulty. Mrs. Foot stated that "although the State of Florida has a very good Beginning Teacher Program, we do little to help experienced teachers. This program allows teaching-peers to assist teachers. The assistance is beneficial because it comes from a colleague. She concluded her remarks by reiterating that the program's strengths are teachers providing assistance for teachers through counseling, feedback, modeling, and motivating one another.

When asked to discuss weaknesses in G County's teacher assistance program, Mrs. Foot listed two. Her comments were:

> The biggest weakness I see, well there are really two.
> The first one is that the consulting teachers have a
> giant responsibility. They're not only in charge of
> their own classroom, but they must spend a minimum of
> 45 days with the teacher they're helping. This puts
> a real big strain on that person. They are doing
> double duty in essence. . . . The other weakness I see
> is the attitude that the majority of the teachers who
> are receiving assistance have. We don't know how to
> correct that, but we're working on it.

An assistant superintendent's perspective. Dr. Simon, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel Services, was interviewed in his office on March 2, 1988. When asked to describe the strengths of G County's teacher assistance program, Dr. Simon replied:

There is no hesitation on the strength of the program.
That is that the teachers have bought into it, into the
problem. I know there are other districts that have
assistance plans that are run by administrators. I
don't want to knock anything, but we just feel like
the strength of ours is that the union—and let's face
it the union represents the teachers as far as we're
concerned—have bought into the process. They were
there at the development of the process, they are there
at every decision making part of the process and they
are there at the end of the process to either bless or
reject the recommendation of the consulting teacher.
If there's one strength in it, its that the teachers
have bought into the system.

When asked to discuss weaknesses in the program as it currently

exists, Dr. Simon described one as glaring. He went on to say the

inherent weakness in the program occurs when a strong teacher is asked

to leave her classroom and become a consulting teacher. His

perception was that even with a certified substitute, the continuity

of the consulting teacher's class was adversely affected.

He further stated

obviously these (consulting teachers) are the cream of the
crop teachers we're talking about . . . but that
consulting teacher is out of his or her classroom for
periods up to several weeks and we don't like it but we
don't have the money and the resources to hire permanent
consulting teachers. Also, the need for consulting
teachers is so varied. The weakness is that we pull a
very strong teacher away from 25 children.

Summary

In G County, the union official, consulting teacher, and district

administrator all perceived the strength of the teacher assistance

program to be a strong union willing to participate fully in working

with management to help "people with problems."

A weakness mentioned by all three respondents was the need for the consulting teacher to spend large amounts of time in another teacher's classroom while still having the responsibility of providing support and direction to her own classroom as she moves back and forth between the two settings.

<div align="center">County F's Assistance Program</div>

Introduction

F County is a large urban county located in the southern portion of the state. This school district was the first in the state to implement a teacher assistance program. The program called the Intensive Assistance Program (IAP) has been in place four years. F County's teacher assistance program was created and implemented by the Director of Personnel. He described how he came to believe that a program of teacher assistance was necessary in F County by stating

> I was a teacher in Palm Beach County. I taught elementary school and junior high school for five years. Then I went to work with the Florida Department of Education. I worked for four and a half years in the teacher certification office as an administrator. Then I worked for about a year and a half as a Title I program consultant, also with the Department of Education. Next, I worked for about five years with the Florida Professional Practices Counsel as a consultant. I traveled all over the state dealing with teacher performance problems and investigating complaints against teachers and that sort of thing, which is where I got the foundation for the idea that I had to develop this program.

As of March 1988, 58 teachers have participated in F County's Intensive Assistance Program.

Program Description

In F County, teachers are referred for Intensive Assistance, by their building-level administrators, to the office of the Director of Personnel. The director's office reviews the referral, past evaluations, school and district level inservice opportunities provided, and then decides if assistance is warranted. If the decision to assist is made, the referral is forwarded to the F County superintendent for approval. If he concurs with the recommendation for assistance, the superintendent notifies the teacher that they are being assigned to an assistance program and assigns an assistance team. The team is composed of the building administrator, the assistant administrator, a staff specialist with expertise in the teacher's area, and a personnel department administrator who serves as the team's facilitator. The IAP involves four primary steps.

First, team members meet with the teacher and review problems while suggesting ways of improvement. Team members make observations at the work site and document teacher performance. Then the team begins a series of eight weekly meetings. At each meeting the teacher and team discuss the teacher's difficulties and successes and continue to brainstorm solutions and offer assistance activities. Solutions brainstormed frequently include the teacher's participation in school or district-level inservice training or observing in another teacher's classroom. Emphasis is given equally to those elements within the

classroom which are going well and to those which are not. An example might be a teacher who is having trouble maintaining classroom discipline. Those activities and times of the day where improvement was observed would be shared with the teacher. Areas needing improvement would also be discussed by the team and the teacher. The observation, brainstorming, activity cycle continues throughout the assistance program. Meetings are held weekly with the teacher and written performance data are gathered by team members.

At the eighth, and last, weekly meeting the team informs the teacher of its decision and forwards a recommendation to the superintendent. The superintendent then makes a recommendation that (a) the performance is now acceptable, (b) a request is made to the State Department of Education to send a competency review team, (c) the teacher is reassigned to another teaching area or school, (d) additional assistance is authorized, or (e) dismissal is recommended.

F County provided this researcher with written artifacts describing actual deficiencies the Intensive Assistance Program had addressed during the 1986-87 school year (see Table 4). In Table 4, the type of employees, contract type, years of employment, number of weeks in intensive assistance, and program status of six teachers in F County during the 1986-87 are reported. This table, which is a reproduction of one page of F County's annual report of teacher assistance for the 1986-87 school year, proved helpful in illustrating the types of problems which may be addressed by teacher assistance programs.

F County's Interviews

A principal's perspective. Mrs. Cindy Sanford was interviewed
by this researcher in her office at the elementary school where she is
principal on March 30, 1988.

When asked to describe the strengths of F County's assistance
program, Mrs. Sanford responded

> the strengths are the personnel who are involved with
> the program. Our personnel director and his support
> team are very tactful people, very warm people, and very
> supportive. They approach the program with "we are here
> to help you." They make teachers feel very comfortable
> about the assistance program. That's the real strength
> of it. The other strength at the same time is their
> honesty in dealing with teachers. If there are problems
> existing and they're not corrected, they're very open and
> honest about that—they're very straightforward. It's
> done so tactfully!

When asked to describe weaknesses of the program, Mrs. Sanford
said that was much more difficult than describing its strengths.
After a few moments of thought, Mrs. Sanford identified followup as a
possible weakness. She believed that upon successful completion of
the assistance program the team should not only offer followup help if
requested by the teacher, but rather that the followup help and
monitoring should be built into the program.

Mrs. Little felt "tension." Mrs. Sheila Little was interviewed
in her classroom at Star Lake Elementary where Mrs. Sanford is
principal.

When asked to give her perceptions of the strengths of F County's
Intensive Assistance Program, Mrs. Little stated

Table 5

F County Intensive Assistance Program Annual Report 1986-87

Type Employee	Contract Type	Years Employed	Years Employed With District Schools	Number Weeks in Intensive Assistance	Program Completed Successfully	Program Not Completed Successfully	Still in Progress	Performance Deficiencies/ Growth Needs	Disposition
Elem. Hearing Impaired Teacher	Contin- uing Contract	12	11	8			X	Planning; following District curriculum; using variety of instructional materials; structuring learning activities	Unsuccessful in program, voluntarily resigned 2/13/87
ESE Teacher	Contin- uing Contract	27	8	8		X		Custodial care provided to profoundly handicapped students only. No evidence of knowledge of techniques of teaching handicapped.	Unsuccessful completion; transferred to different teaching assignment in January 1986. Problems occurred; teacher placed in a second IAP.
High School Science Teacher	Contin- uing Contract	27	8	8			X	Classroom management; planning; presentation of subject material	Unsuccessful completion; voluntarily resigned 6/12/87
Teacher Aide (former Kinder- garten teacher, not re- appointed)	Annual	2	1	8	X			Planning; presentation of subject matter unclear; grammar poor	Successful completion; continued in teacher aide position; resigned to take one-end position; however, did not demon- strate satisfactory performance
Social Studies Teacher	Contin- uing Contract	15	15	16	X			Problems in dealing with students; needs to develop ways to interact positively with students	Successful completion
Music Teacher	Contin- uing Contract	29	21	16	X			Teacher needed to create a learning environment where students enjoy music; develop communication skills to obtain faculty support for program and improve classroom management techniques	Teacher successfully completed program November 20, 1986

I felt it was really beneficial to me. I not only got everything I wanted out of it, assistance in all of the areas even including my personal health. They told me what I could do to keep my energy level up in the afternoon and talked about my voice level which is hard to control . . . Everything was covered in assistance. The floor plan in my classroom--I received help with planning my floor plan and my daily lessons. The voice problem, I didn't know I had. It was pointed out by people assisting me.

In response to a question aimed at ascertaining the respondent's perceptions of weaknesses in the program, Mrs. Little stated

I suppose there's a certain amount of tension involved. I probably didn't feel it as badly as other teachers might because everybody was so supportive. The people working were excellent, very supportive and they kept reassuring me all of the improvements I had made were even better than what they had expected. I guess the tension occurred from being observed so frequently. . . . I guess when I went in I didn't feel this on my record would be something I would have to apologize to principals for. I want to transfer to a school nearer my home, but the minute a principal sees the assistance program on a teacher's record I think they decide this teacher is no good without looking at what the report says. Mrs. Sanford has helped by telling other principals how mine [assistance program] turned out.

The Assistant Director of Personnel's perspective. Dr. Margaret Snow was interviewed in her office at F County's administration building on March 29, 1988.

Dr. Snow listed two strengths of F County's Intensive Assistance Program: (a) commitment by the administration and (b) principal support for the program.

When asked to discuss weaknesses in the county's assistance program, Dr. Snow stated after a long pause:

I really can't think of any. When there's a need for
the program . . . It's been operational in our district
for four years now. We've kind of smoothed out the
wrinkles. I really can't think of anything else.

The researcher's last question for Dr. Snow asked her to list

elements she considered essential for the successful implementation of

a teacher assistance program. She listed as essential the support of

the superintendent and other top district administrators, the presence

of a competent facilitator with excellent interpersonal skills on each

team, gaining the teacher's trust, and being totally honest with

teachers.

Summary

In F County, being honest and gaining the teacher's trust were

seen by the administrative team as essential to a successful program of

assistance. The teacher, while feeling the team's support, felt

tension during the process and currently feels stigmatized by having

the assistance intervention on her record.

This concludes this section of chapter IV. The next section of

this chapter addresses research question four.

Characteristics of Teacher Assistance Programs

This section of the chapter pertains to research question 4.

The question reads as follows: What characteristics appear to be

common in teacher assistance programs within the state of Florida?

Subsequent to data collection and analysis, seven common

characteristics of teacher assistance programs within the state of

Florida were identified by the researcher. The characteristic most

often referred to by respondents was a strong sense of belief in the importance of teachers, administrators, and unions buying into a district's assistance program. A second common characteristic of TAPs was a focus toward helping and remediating teachers. A third characteristic cited was the need for a strong, tactful support team. The presence and need for structure and organization within the assistance process was the fourth common characteristic. The fifth characteristic cited was the need for constant team-to-teacher and teacher-to-team feedback during the course of assistance. The sixth common characteristic of TAPs was an emphasis on providing options for teams as they make recommendations upon the conclusion of assistance. Lastly, the importance of having open avenues of resources for team members to utilize while performing assistance (including subject area specialists and professionals with unique areas of expertise) was a common characteristic of teacher assistance programs within the state of Florida. These seven common characteristics are discussed in greater detail in the following pages.

"Buying Into" Teacher Assistance

Commitment to the process of teacher assistance and a strong sense of belief in the importance of teachers, administrators, and unions buying into a district's assistance program was a recurrent theme uncovered by the researcher. In all five districts with active teacher assistance programs, the Director of Personnel identified the

importance of teachers, unions, and district administrators jointly

buying into programs of teacher assistance.

> G County's Director of Personnel stated
> there is no hesitation on the strength of the program.
> That is that the teachers have bought into it, into
> the problem. . . . they were there at the development
> process, they are there at every decision-making part
> of the process and they are there at the end of the
> process.

A teacher who was the recipient of teacher assistance described

her experience thusly. "I felt it [TAP] was really beneficial to me.

I not only got everything I wanted out of it, assistance in all the

areas even including personal health . . . everything was covered in

assistance."

In F County, the union official interviewed did not believe the

teacher's union had been sufficiently involved in the implementation

of teacher assistance. Despite her belief, the following quote

underscores the importance she placed in involvement and "buying into"

the process: "we believe their intent [TAP] was to help teachers,

possibly to discipline teachers. We're not totally sure—we were not

involved enough."

This theme of buying into teacher assistance was characteristic

of all five school districts with active assistance programs. G

County's Director of Personnel said it most succinctly when he stated

"the teachers have bought into it."

Helping and Remediating Teachers

A second characteristic common to the teacher assistance programs examined in this study was a strong focus on remediation. Helping teachers as opposed to "running them off" was the way in which one district administrator described what the emphasis of teacher assistance should be. Of 16 respondents, all 16 respondents equated assistance with help. They also stressed the positive intent of teacher assistance, i.e., helping achieve improvement rather than documenting for dismissal. The following quote illustrates this characteristics of Florida TAPs: "It's a positive thing . . . I can made suggestions. I can provide a nudge to a teacher when I'm in her classroom."

Support Teams

Support teams for teacher assistance needed to be both strong and tactful. Why was this necessary? Support teams faced unique challenges. In each district described in this case study, teams of educators are convened to provide assistance to colleagues experiencing dysfunction. In many instances, this dysfunction is a product of years of poor teaching practice or apathy. Additionally, the support team may be attempting to assist a teacher who expresses little interest in changing or improving his or her teaching practice. Given the preceding conditions the need for strength and diplomacy on the part of the support team are indeed crucial if remediation is to

occur. Mr. Reeg, a principal in F County, described the task that
support team members may face when rendering assistance. He stated
"it's difficult to work with someone you've been unable to work with
in other ways . . . that part isn't super." Perhaps because the
challenge facing support team members is so grave, this need for
strength and tact on the part of the team members emerged as such a
common characteristic.

Need for Structure and Organization

To some extent the need for structure and organization within the
teacher assistance process seemed rooted in the conviction held by all
participants that teacher assistance was a very serious and important
endeavor. P County's Director of Personnel described the need for
structure by stating

> this is a serious program. We do not want this to
> turn into a catchall for any situation that a
> principal chooses not to contront . . . we consider
> stepping in as a district . . . but only after the
> building principal has done those things necessary
> to give us a trail of documentation showing that
> the problem has been addressed. . . . following
> proper procedure and documentation . . . is critical.

The director of personnel in F County seemed to believe that the
credibility of F County's teacher assistance program would be enhanced
by its structure. Elaborating on this thought, he said "because we've
been able to define our program we have the total support of the
superintendent." These remarks suggest that he believed that

structure and organization were important characteristicts of TAPs,
both for the sake of efficacy and credibility.

The need for structure and organization in order to enable the
assistance (support) team to complete its mission of assistance was
cited by teachers, administrators, directors of personnel, union
officials, and subject area specialists. In contract, the perception
that structure and organization were important for program credibility
was verbalized only by the five directors of personnel who were also
responsible for program operation. Perhaps these verbalizations by
the directors of personnel show their own bias regarding viable,
credible programs of teacher assistance. They are, after all,
responsible and accountable for the implementation and generation of
these programs within the school districts.

Importance of Feedback

Feedback, that is team to teacher and teacher to team feedback,
was cited by both team members and those receiving assistance as being
important to successful assistance. Mrs. Snow described the
importance of feedback thusly "at the end of each team meeting you
must let teachers know where they stand . . . this is the most
critical element in gaining the teacher's trust."

Feedback, that is to say, honest and frequent communication
regarding the progress of remediation as seen by both team and teacher
is essential for two reasons. The first reason feedback is an

essential characteristic of teacher assistance programs is to insure that all parties involved are in agreement as to what has occurred, is occurring, and will occur prior to successful remediation. The second reason team to teacher and teacher to teach feedback is essential is because remediation may not be successful. If teacher assistance is unsuccessful, the need for the teacher receiving assistance to be knowledgeable of the team's perceptions is paramount. Knowledge of his or her shortcomings may prove helpful to that teacher in the event, he or she becomes involved in a dismissal hearing. Awareness of the deficiencies addressed and the deficiencies remaining are part of the due process rights to which all teachers in the State of Florida are entitled.

Options

The sixth common characteristic of TAPs was an emphasis on providing options for teams as they make recommendations upon the conclusion of assistance. That is to say, that if a team is limited by either time or resource constraints its efficacy will be limited. An example of this would be a district with a teacher assistance plan which required a "remediation or initiate dismissal procedures" type recommendation after 6 or 8 weeks of assistance. In such a situation, an assistance team would have little recourse if they had begun to see improvement but ran into an inflexible deadline. Ideally, assistance periods can be lengthened as needed, additional subject area

specialists brought onto the team, and teachers needs closely assessed in order to provide both the greatest opportunity for successful remediation and the most flexible options for teams to achieve that end.

Mr. Jones described options upon the conclusion of assistance as follows:

> We can do anything from conclude that the program was successful and the teacher was receptive, to involuntarily transferring that teacher to another work site, the recommending disciplinary action, to recommending grade level changes within the same school setting, to limiting their scope of practice to one or two subjects that they would feel more competent in.

Availability of Resources

The seventh characteristic of teacher assistance programs can best be characterized as a need for adequate resources. Both human and financial resources must be supplied in order to provide appropriate levels of expertise and training for participants. In addition, funding must be present in adequate amounts to provide district leadership to the program, release time for inservice training (areas such as clinical supervision) and substitute teachers as needed.

<div align="center">Cross Case Analysis</div>

Perceptions of Participants

Symbolic interactionists theorists emphasize the importance of cultural standards and believe those standards are interpreted by

individuals on the basis of their goals and their perceptions of the consequences of various actions (Jacob, 1987).[2]

This researcher found that perceptions of teacher assistance varied among role groups. In addition, they were frequently colored by an individual's perception of the consequences of unsuccessful remediation. The nature of teacher assistance programs is such that perceptions depend, in part, on the role occupied by the participant.

A specific example of perceptions toward teacher assistance which varied by job role was the issue of placement into a program of teacher assistance. Administrators and district staff personnel spoke of placing teachers objectively into the program of teacher assistance. Teachers, assisting teachers, and union officials frequently talked of teachers "volunteering" for assistance. Furthermore, if the assistance was seen as less than voluntary, the subjectivity of the referral process was frequently questioned by teachers. For example, three building level administrators

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[2]According to symbolic interactionists, members of any group that occupies a particular position in the social structure (e.g., minority students or a group of teachers) develop common mental framework and patterns of behavior for dealing with the situations they encounter. Symbolic interactionists assume that in order to understand behavior in situations such as classrooms one must know the cultural standards that form the context of behavior, the individual's goals within that context, and the individual's perceptions of the consequences of various kinds of behavior (Jacob, 1987, p. 33).

interviewed shared with the researcher experiences that they or a colleague had experienced, wherein a teacher had challenged placement into a program of teacher assistance. In each instance, the teacher believed the placement process to be unfair and verbalized dissatisfaction with being recommended for placement. In G County, where placement in a program of teacher assistance is voluntary, two teachers actually resigned when recommended for placement. One teacher stated that she considered the recommendation both a personal affront and an insult, and would rather retire early than participate in such a program.

Some participants in teacher assistance programs appeared to have their perceptions influenced by what has come to be known as a Theory X or Theory Y mind set.[3] The clearest example of a Theory X-Theory Y effect was observed by the researcher during the course of the taped interviews.

In some instances, during the course of the taped interview, the respondent's body language, i.e., frowning, grimacing, or smiling,

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[3]McGregor (in Boles & Davenport, 1985) described proponents of Theory X thinking as believing "people must be coerced, controlled, directed, and threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate effort." Theory Y proponents believe "commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with their achievement . . . the satisfaction of ego and self-actualization needs, can be direct products of effort directed toward organizational objectives."

provided a visual clue regarding his or her attitude toward teacher assistance. Occasionally, respondents verbalized positive or negative attitudes toward the assistance process. In each instance, respondent's who projected a positive attitude toward the assistance process believed that the remediation process with which they had been associated had been helpful to the individual assisted. Respondents whose body language or statements projected a negative attitude or skeptical attitude toward teacher assistance were less likely to perceive it as having been helpful to the individual assisted. It appeared as if McGregor's Theory X or Theory Y mindset was affecting some respondents' perceptions of the assistance process. That is, some respondents appeared, through their choice of words and inflections, to believe fellow educators sincerely desired improvement within the profession. Other respondents manifested what appeared to be Theory X thinking, i.e., teacher assistance was perceived as more punishment than remediation. Presented in the following sections of this chapter are perceptions of assistance team members, the perceptions of teachers receiving assistance, and the perceptions of district staff toward programs of teacher assistance.

Perceptions of Consulting Team Members

In order to describe the perceptions of members of assistance teams, the taped interviews with Mrs. Nona, Mr. David, Mr. Reeg, Mrs. Lincoln, and Mrs. May were examined (excerpts from these interviews

are found in previous sections of this chapter). These five team
members had participated on a total of eight teacher assistance teams.
The following shared perceptions were identified by the researcher.
First, team members perceived team composition to be important, as
evidenced by Mr. Reeg's reference to the benefits for the teacher when
"all facets of the educational community focus on a common task."
Other respondents emphasized the benefit of having a variety of
strengths and perspective present on the team in order to maximize the
brainstorming of suggestions as they relate to teacher remediation.
Mrs. May stated her belief that, when working on a peer basis with a
team, teachers may find it less difficult to verbalize their problems.

Secondly, team members perceived positive attitude as being
beneficial to the assistance process. Mrs. Nona, Language Arts
Supervisor for D County, described how a positive attitude can be
contagious for the teacher receiving assistance if it is "caught" from
her assistance team and manifested in her teaching.

Thirdly, assistance team members prceived their efforts to be
helping the profession even if assistance was unsuccssful. The
following two comments were illustrative of this point: Mrs. Nona
stated

> having other people work with you on an area you
> want to improve, pointing out a situation that you
> may not be aware of makes you a better teacher . . .
> however, I don't think we should keep dead wood . . .
> if dead wood isn't willing to improve.

Mrs. Lincoln was more direct when she stated

> either that teacher is improving well enough to teach
> better or she is not going to be in the classroom,
> and the kids are going to get a better teacher
> otherwise. In the whole, it makes the profession look
> so much better.

Each of these practitioners saw both improvement or "cutting out dead
wood" as helpful and desirable to their profession.

Perceptions of Teachers Receiving Assistance

Both Sheila Little and Celia Star were recipients of teacher
assistance. "Pressure," "tension," "a stigmatized feeling," "an
enhanced self-concept," and "comfortable" were some of the words
utilized by Mrs. Little and Mrs. Star to describe their experiences
with teacher assistance. Each teacher perceived being involved in
teacher assistance to be somewhat stressful. Mrs. Star discussed
being on trial and an inquisition-type process. Mrs. Little referred
to a high degree of tension she experienced while undergoing
assistance.

In direct contrast with these perceptions of pressure were the
perceptions that something beneficial had occurred. More
specifically, each teacher believed they had been helped by the
assistance process. Mrs. Star believed the process of teacher
assistance had brought her closer to her principal and strengthened
her class management (discipline) skills. Mrs. Little described the
help she received as

> everything was covered in assistance. The floor plan
> in my classroom . . . I received help with planning my
> floor plan and my daily lessons. . . . the voice
> problem I didn't know I had. It was even pointed out
> by people assisting me.

Perceptions of District Staff

District staff's perceptions toward teacher assistance programs

seemed to be associated with a general desire to see improvement

within the teaching ranks. Verbalizations made by staff can be

described as of a Theory Y mindset. Directors of Personnel, in

particular described TAPs as another vehicle for upgrading the caliber

of teachers in the classroom. Four of the five personnel directors

interviewed stressed the importance of selection, inservice, and

retention as being equally, if not more important, than remediation.

As a whole, district administrator's made more comments about the

teaching profession, improvement of teaching practice, and benefits

for children than either building level administrators or classroom

teachers. Based on their comments, it appeared to the researcher that

district staff had a more global view of the place of the teacher

assistance program than did school-based personnel.

Given this broad outlook toward teaching, district staff

personnel identified several positive aspects of teacher assistance.

The first aspect they identified was the flexibility to meet local needs

which a TAP can provide. When asked why his district implemented a TAP,

John Jones, P County's Director of Personnel replied

we were concerned that whenever we needed special
assistance-type reviews we needed to contact the
state. It's our feeling based on the knowledge of
our staff and the fact that they are used widely
throughout the state on such things as governor's
committees and D.O.E. committees that we had the
expertise to carry out such assistance. Also, we
felt that we could design a program to run over a
long period of time and get a truer picture of what
was actually occurring.

A second perception held by district staff members was the belief
in the capacity of teachers to improve. D County's Director of the
Teacher Education Center stated "when an assistance team is successful,
teachers . . . buy into changing their skills. The teachers get real
involved if you have a successful Technical Assistance Program."

District staff members were optimistic regarding the
possibilities of remediation. In all five districts, staff level
personnel were enthusiastic, positive, and eager to share anecdotes
concerning successful outcomes from their teacher assistance programs.
One director of personnel stated "we think we can help anyone!"

Lastly, a strongly voiced concern of district staff members was
that TAPs should not, and will not, become a "dumping ground" for
principals with teachers who are difficult to manage. Staff-level
administrators pointed to the protocol involved in referring and
assisting a teacher as being a protection to both the teacher and
the credibility of the TAPs. John Johnes of P County stated "we do
not want the [TAP] to turn into a catch all for any situation that a
principal chooses not to confront."

On the whole, perceptions of district staff interviewed for this study were quite positive regarding the benefits and possibilities of programs of teacher assistance. Maintaining the credibility of TAPs was another strong need as perceived by district staff who had been involved with teacher assistance.

Summary

Respondents interviewed during the course of this research concur with Ruck (1986) that today's teachers are generally open and receptive to a collegial approach to assistance.

An excitement about helping others within the "helping professions," commitment of team members, and communication skills are tools essential to successful teacher assistance and remediation. Overcoming negative perceptions of the assistance process, and resistance or unwillingness to change pose the greatest obstacles to successful teacher assistance.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

This study was conducted to determine the scope and describe the characteristics of teacher assistance programs within the State of Florida. Recently there has been an increased public outcry for improvement in both teaching practices and the teaching profession. Simultaneously, a shortage of certified teachers is occurring nationwide. School systems faced with the preceding concerns are becoming increasingly involved with programs which help remediate and retain teachers experiencing dysfunction. This case study was done to provide information on the status of teacher assistance programs in Florida, the characteristics of the programs, and the perceptions of the people involved actively in the assistance process. In addition, this study was conducted to provide a foundation for future investigations of teacher assistance programs.

Review of the Literature

Teacher assistance is an emerging practice within the field of instructional supervision. In order to provide perspective for this study, an insight into recent practices in supervision as well as research related to teacher assistance was provided in Chapter II.

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This review of the literature suggested teachers are open to collegial assistance, programs in various parts of the country are achieving success in remediation, and administrators and colleagues who concentrate on building upon strengths can facilitate successful remediation through the process of teacher assistance. Utilizing these findings from the search of the literature as a foundation, the researcher described the scope of Florida teacher assistance programs and the perceptions, including strengths and weaknesses, of those people actively involved in teacher assistance.

Methodology

Case study methodology designed to describe the perceptions of those practitioners currently involved in teacher assistance programs in Florida appeared to be an efficient method of developing a knowledge base to support future studies regarding teacher assistance programs. The research process used in this study consisted of three phases. Phase one was the collection of initial data through a questionnaire mailed to all 67 school districts. In phase two of the research process, the research followed up on data identified through the mailed questionnaire and consisted of 16 in-depth interviews. Phase three of the research process was analysis of the data.

Results of the Study

Respondents interviewed during the course of this research concurred with Ruck (1986) that today's teachers are generally open and receptive to collegial approaches to assistance (p. 4).

Teacher assistance programs were found to be actively functioning
in five Florida school districts. Interviews with respondents from
these five districts led to the following conclusions: an
excitement about helping others within the "helping professions," a
commitment of assistance from team members, and communication skills,
are tools essential to teacher assistance and remediation. Overcoming
negative perceptions of the assistance process, and resistance or
unwillingness to change appear to pose the greatest obstacles to
successful programs of teacher assistance.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn based upon the results of
this study. First, teacher assistance programs in the State of
Florida are in an emergent status. Second, dimensions of Florida
teacher assistance programs can be described and elements of an
emerging model discussed.

Emergent Status of Teacher Assistance Programs

Results of the mailed questionnaire (Florida Teacher Assistance
Program Questionnaire) and follow-up telephone surveys indicated only
5 school districts of the 67 within the State of Florida have active
programs of teacher assistance as defined in Chapter I of this study;
i.e., teacher assistance programs refers to a school district's plan
for assisting teachers, especially experienced teachers who are having
career-threatening performance difficulties. Teacher assistance

programs as described in this study are characterized by (a) a
philosophical belief that management has an obligation in teacher
assistance, (b) collegial involvement, (c) a team approach, (d)
administrative involvement, and (e) union involvement. These
characteristics are noteworthy in that they are common to both current
active teacher assistance programs and to the "emergent" model of
teacher assistance which is discussed in this chapter. Although there
is evidence that teachers experiencing dysfunction are willing to
receive help from colleagues (Alfonso & Goldberry, 1982; Cutter &
Grossnickle, 1984; Jenson, 1981), only seven school districts
within the State of Florida have programs which have been formally
approved by the district school board and only five are currently
active.

The preceding numbers are not surprising in light of the low
affirmative response rate to survey questions 4-7 (see Table 4,
Chapter IV) of the survey questionnaire. Results based upon polling
directors of personnel from 59 school districts indicated that only
four directors had read professional literature concerning teacher
assistance programs and only nine knew of a school district which had
an active program.

This low awareness level regarding teacher assistance on the
part of directors of personnel underscores the conclusions that
programs of teacher assistance are just emerging. A more encouraging

aspect of teacher assistance was the survey questionnaire response
indicating that 16 of 21 directors of personnel who responded
believed a program of teacher assistance could be helpful to their
school district.

Given the fact that seven Florida school districts have currently
embraced the concept of teacher assistance programs (five are active)
and that these programs have increased from one program to seven in
four years, continued difussion throughout the state is predicted by
this researcher. As long as school districts with currently active
programs have experiences similar to that indicated by the following
quote, the gradual prolification of programs will continue. D County's
"teacher of the year," Mrs. May, stated

> it's [technical assistance] part of our plan for
> excellence; we're very forward-thinking in D County
> in what we are looking to achieve with our teachers.
> We want to provide the best quality education . . .
> the more assistance we can provide that teacher
> . . . the better job they're going to do.

The strong positive perceptions toward teacher assistance held by
practitioners in the five districts described in this case study may
provide both the impetus and nurturing effect necessary for teacher
assistance programs in this state to continue to proliferate.

Additional data support the conclusion that teacher assistance
programs are in an emergent state in Florida. Five years ago there
were no programs of teacher assistance within the State of Florida,

three years ago there were two active programs within the State of Florida; and, in 1988, there were seven school board adopted programs, five of which were active. In addition, 14 school districts in the state indicated an interest in teacher assistance based upon the description of such programs which was included in the Florida Teacher Assistance Program Questionnaire they received. Although locations of teacher assistance programs are few in number, they have grown from zero to seven within the past 5 years and are distributed geographically from south Florida to north central Florida with at least one location on each coast.

Emerging Dimensions of Teacher Assistance Programs

A model of teacher assistance in the State of Florida appears to be evolving. Inherent in this model is a belief that teacher assistance is an obligation of the profession. Associated with the belief and evidenced in Florida's five active TAPs is a commitment to collegial assistance. That is, the model emerging is characterized by a team of educators working together to provide assistance and remediation to colleagues. As discussed in the section on team members perceptions, working with a team on a peer basis made it easier for some teachers to verbalize and confront their teaching deficiencies. In addition, the positive expectations manifested by team members was cited as reinforcing and beneficial by those teachers receiving assistance.

How Assistance Teams Function

Subsequent to referral by a building-level administrator, review of documentation and previous remediation efforts by district staff, and upon concurrence from the superintendent, a teacher is placed involuntarily into a program of teacher assistance. At this time, members of the assistance team are selected. Membership is typically composed of one or more of the teacher's building-level administrators, a subject area specialist, a union official (if desired by the teacher), and a representative from the district personnel office.

Team members first meet with the teacher being assisted and discuss areas of deficiency. Teams then visit the work site in order to observe teaching practices and collect data. During the next 8 weeks the team meets weekly with the teacher to brainstorm suggestions for improvement and to discuss any progress that has been noted.

At the eighth and last weekly meeting, the team informs the teacher of their decision regarding the assistance process just completed and forwards a recommendation to the superintendent. The superintendent must then make a decision. That decision may be to conclude the assistance with a notation that performance is now acceptable. Other decisions upon the completion of assistance may be reassignment to another school or teaching area, change to another grade level, limitations of the teacher's scope of practice from number of different subjects to one or two, request to the State

Department of Education for a competency review, or initiation of dismissal proceedings. Strengths and weaknesses of this model and implications for funding, evaluation, and long-term efficacy are discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of TAPs

Analysis of the data revealed identifiable strengths and weaknesses of the five active teacher assistance programs in the State of Florida. Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions regarding strengths were drawn. First, collegial approaches to assistance are perceived as strengths. Second, the utilization of subject area experts is perceived as a strength when providing assistance. Third, having union officials, teachers, and administrators mutually involved in and committed to teacher assistance was perceived as a strength. Finally, the philosophical viewpoint that teachers, through teacher assistance, are becoming better teachers was perceived as extremely beneficial to the profession.

Collegial Approaches to Assistance

Ruck (1986) commented that recent public criticism of schools and teachers has fostered a receptive environment for collegiality. He further stated that the adverse publicity toward public education has tended to bring educators together and there is currently a strong movement in education to raise the status of the profession by collective collaborative effort. This desire to raise the status of

the profession through collaborative effort was one of the strengths
of TAPs. That is to say both teachers and teams charged with assisting
teachers consistently described the benefits of the team approach to
remediation. Buck David, assistant principal in Q County, stated it
thusly "the program brought lots of ideas and two or more heads are
definitely better than one."

Utilization of Subject Area Specialists

Utilizing subject area specialists as team members was another
perceived strength common to the five active programs of teacher
assistance. Subject area specialists add expertise to the assistance
team, while simultaneously providing the teacher an opportunity to
receive feedback from an administrator other than her building
principal, thereby providing a possibly less threatening avenue of
communication.

Mary Bruno described her ability as a subject area specialist to
provide help:

> Sometimes it's just a matter with the old-fashioned
> teachers just giving them some new methods. It's
> not that they don't know how to teach, it's just
> that they maybe lost their motivation and they've
> been doing it a certain way for so long and then,
> sometimes they just need a little upper, somebody
> to come in and give them a little encouragement.
> . . . It's just that they need somebody to come in
> and just kind of get them back on the track again.

Subject specialists' rapport with teachers was cited by both
teachers and subject area specialists as a strength of the

assistance process. Subject area specialists "spoke the teacher's language" and were adept at establishing helping relationships within the classroom.

Commitment of All Parties Involved

Having union officials, teachers, and administrators mutually involved in and committed to teacher assistance was also perceived as a strength. All five districts with active teacher assistance programs currently involve these three groups in the teacher assistance process. As described in Chapter IV Findings, eight respondents cited the benefits of having a diversity of viewpoints on the assistance team. It appeared, based in particular on teacher responses, as if a diverse team composition was perceived as protecting the teacher's rights and interests. Union participation was seen as particularly helpful in this regard.

F County's Director of Personnel shared this comment regarding the strengths and safeguards of a team approach to assistance:

> It [TAP] brings the strongest resources that you have in the district together to try to help teachers. . . . Without the people from the instructional program, then you wouldn't have that kind of strength. The principals provided their kinds of strengths and the assistant principals, but its having all those people together. . . . One of our directors made a comment one day in a presentation on this program, said that, to the principals, this is not a killer bee program, and you can't get five people on a team to get together and to go after somebody in an unfair way. You're not gonna get that. You've got

too many people from different points of view
operating on the team. So I think that's another
strength, that you have a lot of people on the team
from different perspectives that help to balance the
team.

Teachers on Becoming Better Teachers

"Kids are getting a better teacher out of it" is how Mrs.
Lincoln in G County described teacher assistance. Her perception
was that assistance is both beneficial and helpful "in making the
profession look better."

Star Runyon, Q County teacher, shared this comment:

Teachers sometimes don't get to share their good stuff
unless they're going through something like this [TAP].
But I got a chance to show a lot of creativeness, I
got a chance to use a lot of resources, I had a chance
to leave my campus and go to another school, which was
super, because I saw a teacher that had wonderful
control over her class, you know, just wonderful, and
I got a lot of good ideas from that. It just opened up
a new avenue for me to expand on some of the things that
I was doing and you know, maybe it just gave me insight
to what to go look for, and gave me the opportunity to
do it.

These comments were illustrative of the attitudes manifested toward
teacher assistance as illuminated in this case study.

Weaknesses of teacher assistance programs frequently cited
include (a) lack of adequate funding, (b) inadequately trained team
members, and (c) dual job responsibilities (i.e., "regular" job and
team membership) held by members of the assistance team. These
weaknesses are discussed individually in the following sections.

Lack of Adequate Funding

Lack of funding was seen as more of a potential weakness than an actual weakness in this study. That is to say, that all five districts with active TAPs are providing sufficient manpower and resources to operate the programs at this time. Although no district provided a cost figure, the concern of those charged with administering TAPs is whether funding will grow proportionately with the number of participants in TAPs. D County's Director of Technical Assistance responded to a question regarding weaknesses of TAPs by describing a need currently evident in D County.

> Weaknesses, probably the biggest thing I could say is there
> aren't enough people to go around to get the kind of
> support . . . there are too few of us in the district, like
> two of us in staff development, that have been trying to
> meet a lot of these needs and we just can't meet the
> request [for assistance].

This concern with funding in order to provide adequate services is indeed a potential weakness and should be considered fully by a district prior to the implementation of a program.

Inadequately Trained Team Members

Two of the five districts with active TAPs reported difficulties with untrained or poorly trained assistance team members. D County's Director of Technical Assistance commented on how this weakness could be addressed. She stated

> one of the things that I'm realizing is that we need to
> train people in how to truly diagnose and collect the
> data. Good clinical supervision models, so we can

enable . . . we can get to the point when these people can truly see the pattern of behavior that are causing some of their problems in the classroom.

F County's Director of Personnel listed four skill areas team members should be trained in: (a) interaction skills, (b) summarizing and paraphrasing skills, (c) conferencing skills, and (d) rapport building skills. Lack of any of these skills was cited as a detriment to the assistance process both at this case site and throughout this study.

Dual Responsibility

Dual responsibilities was seen as a weakness of teacher assistance programs primarily by two groups: teachers serving as team members and subject area specialists. This referred specifically to team members perceptions of having too little time to adequately perform their job role and team member role as well. Both teachers and all four subject area specialists lauded the teacher assistance process but lamented the time away from their regular job that it involved.

G County presented the most severe example of dual responsibility. In G County the consulting teacher is required to spend a minimum of 45 days in the classroom of the teacher receiving assistance. The consulting teacher, a peer selected to help because of exemplary teaching practices, must maintain liaison with a substitute in her classroom and provide direction and feedback to the teacher she is assisting. Toledo, Ohio, which operates a similar assistance program

has alleviated this problem by hiring consulting teachers on a full-time basis, thereby releasing them from any classroom responsibilities. Asking too much of any individual, even for a worthy cause is certainly a potential weakness. Adequate funding, release time, and permanent substitutes would appear to address this need most fully.

Implications for Practitioners

This study described the current status of teacher assistance programs and analyzed the perceptions of its participants. Various implications for practitioners may be considered. One implication from this study is the need for financial and administrative support. Although funding figures were not provided to the researcher, participants, particularly directors of personnel, stressed obtaining both financial and philosophical support for a TAP prior to attempting implementation. If, for example, State Department of Education mandated TAPs in each school district statewide, costs would be measured in millions of dollars and categorical funding by the legislature would be a necessity, particularly in small school districts with limited resources.

John Jones stressed the importance of securing philosophical backing prior to implementing a TAP. He stated "I would suggest that they [school districts] check into what the reaction of their superintendent is and then check around the state and see what's already in place. Because without the superintendent's backing, it won't fly."

A second implication from this study is the need for inservice training for participants. The need for inservice training in such areas as clinical supervision and interpersonal communication skills was discussed in Chapter IV. An implication not discussed previously is the danger inherent when inadequately trained administrators recommend placement (inappropriately) into programs of teacher assistance. Placing a teacher into a program through poor identification procedures could be devastating to morale. Indeed arbitrary or capricious placement of teachers into TAPs could ruin those individual's careers.

A final implication of this study is a need for additional research. Due to the emergent nature of the program, long-range data on the effects of remediation are not available for Florida TAPs. It is not possible at this time to accurately forecast whether assistance once rendered has a permanent effect on teachers. What will be the status in 1995 of the teacher who received assistance in 1985? Are effective teaching practices acquired through programs of teacher assistance carried over for long periods of time? The researcher believes questions of this nature to be the basis of future research on Florida Teacher Assistance programs.

A third implication of this study is the lack of evaluative data regarding the five active teacher assistance programs. No school district has of yet attempted to formally evaluate a TAP. Programs are in place, appear to be functioning, but lack evaluative criteria to measure their efficacy.

TAPS in Florida: Problems and Prospects

Teacher assistance programs in Florida have come into being only since 1984. In four years, they have grown in number from one to seven. The researcher believes the continued proliferation of TAPs will occur due to the following factors. First, perceptions of a shortage of teachers makes remediation and retention an attractive alternative to dismissal. In addition, remediation avoids legal confrontations over tenure, teacher rights, and union responsibilities. Second, both previously cited research and current experience with Florida TAPs indicated a prevalent atmosphere of acceptance toward collegial, collaborative supervision.

A third factor the researcher believed to be supportive of the proliferation of TAPs was his perception of administrators' attitudes toward such programs. Throughout the study a willingness on the part of school districts to assist teachers in distress was evident. The willingness to assist teachers in conjunction with an atmosphere conducive to collegial relations should insure the growth of effective TAPs in the State of Florida.

There are possible roadblocks which might prevent the proliferation of effective programs. Obstacles previously discussed are inadequate funding, poorly trained team members and administrators, a lack of longitudinal data regarding TAP efficacy, and nonexistent evaluative measures for currently functioning TAPs.

Given the current state of TAPs in Florida and noting the obstacles in the path of their proliferation, it is the opinion of the researcher that steady growth of TAPs in Florida will continue. Based on what is known about currently active TAPs and given the strong Theory Y mindset of members of this "helping" profession, it is reasonable to expect that current successful practice will both continue and disseminate further.

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Dear Colleague:

I encourage your cooperation in responding to the attached
questionnaire. The writer, Dean Niederkohr, an Alachua County
principal, is also a doctoral student at the University of Florida.
Dean is seeking information for his dissertation on the status of
teacher assistance programs in the state of Florida.

If your response to questionnaire item one is affirmative, you will be
personally contacted by Mr. Niederkohr. At that point, he will be
seeking answers to some additional questions regarding your perception
of teacher assistance programs.

All data obtained in this questionnaire and utilized in the doctoral
dissertation will be presented in a professional and confidential
manner.

Thank you for your cooperation in this endeavor.

                                    Sincerely,

                                    D. P. Magann
                                    Superintendent

TEACHER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

The aim of this questionnaire is to ascertain the current status of teacher assistance programs in the state of Florida. Please respond to these brief questions utilizing the following definition as a referent. TEACHER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: A school district's plan for assisting teacher, especially tenured teachers who are experiencing career-threatening performance difficulties.

1. Does your county currently have a fully operational or pilot program of teacher assistance?

        Yes _____   No _____

2. If the answer to question 1 is yes, please indicate the name of the administrator who supervises the program.

        _____

    If you responded affirmatively to question 1, please omit questions 3 through 8. If not, please continue.

    Characteristics of teacher assistance programs frequently include (a) placement into the program based on administrative referral, (b) assistance which is aimed primarily at remediation of subject matter or classroom organizational deficiencies, (c) involvement of peer teacher/s and (d) a determination by supervisors that termination is a possible consequence if remediation and improvement do not occur.

3. Given this additional information, do you feel such a program would be:

        Feasible   Yes _____   No _____
        Necessary   Yes _____   No _____
        Helpful   Yes _____   No _____

    Comments: _____

    _____

    _____

4. Have you read about teacher assistance programs in professional literature?

      Yes _____   No _____

5. Do you know of a school district in Florida that has a teacher assistance program?

      Yes _____   No _____

6. Have you visited a school district seeking information on a teacher assistance program?

      Yes _____   No _____

7. Has a teacher assistance program ever been discussed at the bargaining table in your district?

      Yes _____   No _____

8. If your district does not currently have a teacher assistance program, please check all appropriate blanks regarding why not.

      Lack of knowledge   _____
      Cost   _____
      Union resistance   _____
      Board resistance   _____
      No perceived need   _____
      Other   _____   (please comment)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Interviewee's name:

Interview number:

Date:

Place:

Sex:

Teaching experience:

Education:

Position (how long):

County:

Thank you for providing me this opportunity to interview you.

1. You have indicated on the questionnaire that your district has a program of teacher assistance. Could you tell me why your county implemented this program?

2. Could you tell me how the program operates? Probe if necessary who's selected for assistance, who assists, is there a time for improvement?

3. Based on your experience, what would you say are the strengths of this program?

4. What about weaknesses?

We've been talking about your personal experiences with this program.
Now I'd like to ask you some questions concerning your opinions about
this program.

5. What are some of the things you really have liked about the
   program?

6. What about dislikes? What are some things you don't like so much
   about the program?

7. I've asked about strengths and weaknesses of the Teacher
   Assistance Program. I've also asked you about your likes and
   dislikes. Are there some characteristics or elements you consider
   to be essential for a TAP?

8. This last question is aimed directly at getting your perspective.
   What advise would you offer a school district which is considering
   the implementation of a TAP?

   If answer is "Don't," probe with can you elaborate?

APPENDIX D
DOMAIN ANALYSIS SHEET

1. Semantic Relationship _____

2. Form _____

3. Example _____

Included Terms	Relationships (kinds of)	Cover Term
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____	Structural Question: _____

Notes:

8. This last question is aimed directly at getting your perspective. What advice would you offer a school district which is considering the implementation of a TAP? If answer is "Don't," probe with can you elaborate?

They should get advice from districts that have had it in place for a number of years and not just one district. I think they should go to several districts and then meet with people who are interested like yourself and then come up with your own plan. I think it is a very necessary program. I'm real excited!
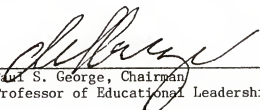
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dean A. Niederkohr was born in Winter Haven, Florida, and spent most of his early childhood and teenage years in Gainesville, Florida. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in education in 1970, a Master of Education degree in 1973, and a Specialist in Education degree in 1977, all from the University of Florida.

From 1970–1974, he was a classroom teacher at Mebane Middle School in Alachua, Florida. From 1974 to 1979, he was assistant principal for curriculum at Lincoln Middle School in Gainesville, Florida. In 1979, he was appointed principal of Lake Forest Elementary School in Gainesville, Florida. Since 1983, he has served as principal of Metcalfe Elementary School in Gainesville, Florida.

His professional memberships include the American Association of School Administrators, the Florida Association of School Administrators, the Council of Exceptional Children, and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Paul S. George, Chairman
Professor of Educational Leadership

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Sandra B. Damico
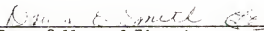Professor of Foundations of Education

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Forrest W. Parkay
Associate Professor of Educational Leadership

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Education and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

December, 1988

Dean, College of Education

Dean, Graduate School